The White Peacock

By Olga Petrova

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THE WHITE PEACOCK

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A Play in Three Acts

BY

OLGA PETROVA

BOSTON
THE FOUR SEAS COMPANY
1922

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FOR

ALAN DALE

IN AFFECTIONATE REMEMBRANCE

PS3531
.E92W5
1922

THE WHITE PEACOCK

CAST OF CHARACTERS

As originally produced at the
Comedy Theatre, New York, December 25, 1921

Anna	*Ludmilla Toretzka*
Marietta	*Doris Carpenter*
Don Miguel de Ribera y Santallos	*Leon Gordon*
Rafael Roderiguez	*E. L. Fernandez*
Revette de Ribera y Santallos	*Madame Petrova*
The Countess Wyanock	*Letha Walters*
Captain Hubert Lang	*George C. Thorpe*
Don Cesar de Mendoza y Gonzales	*Malcolm Fassett*
Joselito	*Charles Brokaw*
Pedro	*Judson Langill*

ACT I. *Sleeping Room in the Home of Revette.*
(*Eight weeks elapse between the First and Second Acts.*)

ACT II. *Studio in the Home of Revette.*

ACT III. *Room in the House of Don Miguel.*
(*Evening of the same day.*)

Place: *Seville, Spain.*

MARIETTA. I couldn't sleep. And if I had I should have dreamed. The music reminded me of—

ANNA. Chut. Chut. Chut. Chut. A fool and his noise. [*She goes to window and draws the casement close.*] A man that befouls the stillness of the night is cause enough to dream anything.

MARIETTA. Oh, why do you close the window, Anna? I love to hear him sing. [ANNA *sniffs disdainfully. She goes to the bed and during the ensuing scene prepares it in readiness for her mistress.*] Even though the music hurts I love it. I love it. Listen, Anna. Even the nightingale is singing to welcome the eve of St. Antony.

ANNA. St. Antony! Bah.

MARIETTA. St. Antony can never mean anything to me again.

ANNA. Still worrying out your heart for that good for nothing?

MARIETTA. He wasn't good for nothing.

ANNA. All men are good for nothing.

MARIETTA. Not my Antonio. He couldn't help being killed, could he?

ANNA. I'm not saying he could. But he could have married you. Good for nothing scamp to get you into trouble and then calmly go off and be gored to death in the bull ring without leaving you so much as a peseta to help with the child when it comes—But there—It's my belief you're better off at that. May be he saved you some tears. The past is soon forgotten. The present stings and stings. Yes. You'll forget.

MARIETTA. I can't forget.

ANNA. We all say that. But we do.

MARIETTA. Sometimes, Anna, I wonder what it's all for. There are so many that might have been taken, instead of my Antonio.

ANNA. Yes. Some that are a trouble to themselves and to all that know them.

MARIETTA. Don Miguel for instance.

ANNA. [*Looking around nervously and crossing herself meanwhile.*] Sssssh!

MARIETTA. Why hush? There's no one to hear.

ANNA. The Señor Don Miguel has ears that stretch from one pole to the other.

MARIETTA. All Sevilla hates him, I most of all.

ANNA. And yet you're grieving for a lover that might have made you as bad a husband as Don Miguel has made the Señora, if he'd lived long enough to grow tired of you.

MARIETTA. But he didn't live. And so St. Antony's feast of lovers is like a sword in my heart tonight—and under that sword is my child.

ANNA. Our mistress will see to the wellbeing of your child.

MARIETTA. If it hadn't been for the Señora I should have stuck a knife between my ribs the day Don Miguel ordered me out of the house. But first I should have sharpened it for him. I hate him, Anna. I hate him for what he did to me and I hate him for the sorrow he has caused the Señora.

ANNA. Yes. He's a bad one. I can't see how a man that is so rotten in his heart can be a good minister for the country. Thirteen years ago when he was Chief Justice, he was as popular in Sevilla as a one-horned bull to a breeder.

MARIETTA. It isn't often that a justice becomes Minister of the Interior.

ANNA. No. But Don Miguel made up his mind to it long ago and when he sets his mind on anything he gets it, even if he has to commit murder to get it. Yes. He's a bad one, just rotten through and through.

MARIETTA. He's worse than that.

ANNA. I remember him when he was no more than a boy. Many and many a time I've seen him ride down old women in the street that didn't get out of his road soon enough to please him. That's what he's done all his life—trampled down any one or anything that has stood in his way. Well, it's been peace here in this house without him.

MARIETTA. Such peace as we never knew for a single day before we left the house of Don Miguel.

ANNA. We shall have had seven weeks of it tomorrow.

MARIETTA. Yes. Seven weeks. What was that? [*They start and listen.*]

ANNA. It's only the wind blowing the bouganvilleas across the window. Now since you're up you may as well save my legs a run. Go down to the kitchen and make some sandwiches for the Señora—caviare and some paté. She may be hungry when she comes in. [*As* MARIETTA *starts for the door.*] Bring also a bottle of wine.

MARIETTA. Is the wine out? Or must I go to the cellar?

ANNA. It's out, little coward. It's on the table under the window. I put it there myself an hour ago.

MARIETTA. All right. May I take this candle, Anna?

ANNA. Yes. But for the Virgin's sake, don't spill the grease all over the carpet.

MARIETTA. I'll be careful, Anna.

[MARIETTA *goes out.* ANNA *take up her sewing basket and sews quietly for a few seconds on a strip of scarlet silk.* MARIETTA *re-enters. She has a tray with a large flat loaf on it. She has a wine bottle and glasses.*]

ANNA. You've been quick for once.

MARIETTA. I haven't made the sandwiches, Anna. It is so quiet downstairs, and the candle casts such big shadows. I thought I could make them just as well up here.

ANNA. A sleeping room is no place for preparing food in.

MARIETTA. Oh, Anna, please!

ANNA. Very well. But don't get the crumbs all over the floor.

MARIETTA. I won't, Anna.

ANNA. [*As the voice of the guitar player is heard again.*] There goes that fool and his guitar again.

MARIETTA. Don't you really like the music, Anna? I think it's beautiful. Listen to what he says:

> "The poppy is not redder than your mouth.
> The orange scent is not sweeter than your hair.
> The stork is not whiter than your flesh.
> And the tortures of Gehenna are not more bitter
> Than the bitterness of our parting."

Oh! If it were only my Antonio singing for me—

ANNA. Chut. Chut. Chut. Chut. Music's noise. No matter who plays it nor for whom it is played.

MARIETTA. Did you ever have anyone play just for you, Anna?

ANNA. By the holy virgin, hark to her. One might think I were ninety and as ugly as the mother of sin herself.

MARIETTA. I hope you may live to be ninety, but you'll always be a comely woman, Anna.

ANNA. She has wisdom of the serpent, this Marietta.

MARIETTA. I mean it. Do you know, Anna, I never can understand why you don't marry again.

ANNA. Me marry again? Why and whom, pray?

MARIETTA. Oh, there are many that would like you for a wife. José, for instance. I saw him give you an extra fish today after the scale had turned. He's a fine man, is José, and he'd make you a fine husband. He's got wonderful eyes.

ANNA. Wonderful eyes! Does one marry a man's eyes? Besides, I've had one husband with wonderful eyes; and thanks be to God he's safe in his grave.

MARIETTA. Weren't you happy with him, Anna?

ANNA. Oh, I don't know. What is happiness anyhow? Still, it wasn't till he'd been dead a year that I found I could get money for doing for someone else what I'd done for him for years for nothing—unless it was kicks and bruises. He was a dirty pig, my Alfredo, God rest his soul!

MARIETTA. But you might have better luck next time, Anna.

ANNA. There isn't going to be any next time, my girl. Does a freed bird fly back into it's cage?

MARIETTA. It wouldn't be the same cage, Anna.

ANNA. Why should I want any cage? Why should I marry now? I ask you. For a man?—I've had one. For a home? I've got one. For money?—I've saved up five thousand pesetas since I am with the Señora. Shall I marry and let some man—invest—it for me? Not I. Shall I marry again to be cursed again morning, noon and night? The Señora is kind to me. She pays me for what I do and she thanks me as well. Does a man do that? Not at all. He thinks he's doing you a favour if he lets you work yourself to death for him for nothing.

MARIETTA. But there's love, Anna.

ANNA. Love! Bah! Tell that to someone that's younger than I. Are the sandwiches ready?

MARIETTA. Almost. The Señora is late tonight. Perhaps she will spend the night with her ladyship.

ANNA. No. The Señora told me that she would be home before midnight. She wishes to be up with the dawn.

MARIETTA. One would think she would grow tired the way she works. She has the strength and courage of a man, our mistress.

ANNA. Strength and courage of a man? By the saints, what's that? A man that goes to bed with a toothache and brings hell to a peaceful household until his pain is assuaged.

MARIETTA. It may be that men are not very patient when they have a toothache. But they do go to war. Surely that's brave.

ANNA. How many go of their own courage? Or do they go because the law compels them? Are they brave enough to resist the law? To go is not courage. It is

common sense. They will certainly be shot if they resist. If they obey they may escape.

MARIETTA. But all the same—

ANNA. Besides, a woman would rather follow her man anywhere than to be left alone to start at every shadow —afraid of every letter carrier that comes—of every newspaper that comes out. That's worse than going to war.

MARIETTA. But think of the maimed; the injured.

ANNA. I am thinking of them. And I'm thinking that there is some glory, at any rate, attached to their wounds. But a woman—she may be suffering the pangs of childbirth; her very entrails may be shrieking to heaven—but up to the last moment her husband's dinner must be cooked; the floors must be scrubbed as though nothing at all were happening. And, think you her husband or any one else regards that as courage or glorious? Not at all. They say "It is natural for women to suffer. They don't feel as men feel." So they take themselves to the wineshop until the bustle is over.

MARIETTA. [*Covering her face with her hands.*] Oh, Anna.

ANNA. Oh, I'm sorry. I forgot. There, I didn't mean to hurt you.

MARIETTA. How can you speak in such a way?

ANNA. Why not? Does shutting one's eyes remove the thing that offends them? And if one's eyes are open one must see the clouds as well as see the sun. Don't I remember my old son of a sow, coming home as drunk as a bullfighter on a holiday, the very night my little Jesus was born. He said he couldn't bear to see suffering.

So he left me alone with that old crone Maria (she was so blind she couldn't see to deliver a cat of kittens) until four in the morning. When he did come in—he wanted his supper. I'm a good Catholic, I hope, and I don't wish any one any harm; but if I could have seen my Alfredo once, just once, in childbirth, I'd forgive him anything he ever did to me. Strength and courage of a man. Tears of Christ!

MARIETTA. Alfredo was a bad one. But all men are not like him. Listen, Anna! There goes that nightingale again. One would think so small a throat would burst with so much singing.

ANNA. He's like a man, that nightingale. He sings fit to burst his windpipe while he woos his mate and then —when she is won he'll be as dumb as a fish until the mating season comes again and with it another mate.

MARIETTA. Anna!

ANNA. Don't I know? Didn't my Alfredo serenade me on his guitar until he got me, and then, Holy Virgin—what a swine! What a hog! What a filthy bag of tricks —Not that one should speak ill of the dead. [*The clock chimes again.*] There, if you've finished the sandwiches you'd better get to bed. You've got to be up early in the morning. Take the tray with you. [*As* MARIETTA *hesitates.*] Come now.

MARIETTA. Very well, Anna. Good night.

ANNA. Good night and pleasant dreams.

[*As* MARIETTA *starts to go out, a knocking is heard on the lower door. Both women start and hold their breaths. The knocking becomes louder.*]

MARIETTA. What's that?

ANNA. Who would come here at this hour of the night?

MARIETTA. Perhaps the Señora's friends have come back with her and they are knocking.

ANNA. They wouldn't knock so loud. It might be Don Miguel.

MARIETTA. Don't open the door.

ANNA. [*As knocking continues.*] Whoever it is, means to enter.

MARIETTA. But if it should be Don Miguel—

ANNA. [*Goes to the casement and calls.*] Who's there?

VOICE. It's I. Open the door.

MARIETTA. It *is* Don Miguel. Oh, Anna, don't open the door.

ANNA. He'll break it down if I don't. I'll go down and tell the Señor that the Señora is not at home. Perhaps then he'll go away.

VOICE. Come, hurry. Hurry! Do you want broken heads as well as a broken door?

MARIETTA. Mother of God have mercy on us.

ANNA. Just a moment, Señor. I was asleep and didn't know that it was the Señor. May God's lightning blind him! Just a moment, Señor, I'm coming.

MARIETTA. Oh, Anna, I'm afraid.

ANNA. Go to your room. The Señor won't go up there anyhow.

VOICE. Are you going to open this door?

ANNA. Coming, Señor, coming.

[*They both exit. The nightingale, not at all concerned with the tragedies of human lives, continues to sing. And the moon continues to shine.*]

MIGUEL. [*Outside.*] Are you all deaf in this house?
ANNA. A thousand pardons, Señor.
MIGUEL. Where's your mistress?
ANNA. The Señora is out.
MIGUEL. I'll go up and wait.
ANNA. But, Señor.

[MIGUEL *enters followed by* ANNA. *He is tall, swarthy, and handsome. He is haughty of bearing but at the same time has the air of a* bon viveur. *He looks around the room with a sneer of amusement at the canopied bed.*]

MIGUEL. Where do you say your mistress is?
ANNA. The Señora has gone with the Countess Wyanock. She may spend the night at her house.
MIGUEL. I'll wait till she returns. Send and tell her that I am here.
ANNA. Señor—
MIGUEL. What is it? Are you transfixed? Have you spoken so long a foreign tongue that you have forgotten your own.
ANNA. My orders from the Señora were that I was not to leave the house until she returned.
MIGUEL. Do as I tell you.

[*As* MIGUEL *speaks the door opens and* RAFAEL RODERIGUEZ *enters. He is rather short and thick set. His hair grows low on his forehead, which is ornamented by a pair of bushy eyebrows. The eyes below are black and piercing. His lips are heavy and sensual. He has a habit of running his*

fingers through his hair. His fingers are clumsy with broad spatulated tips. He is dressed showily and is very much impressed with his own personal appearance.]

RAFAEL. I found the lower door open so I took the liberty of coming up.

ANNA. You cannot come in here, Señor. It is the Señora's sleeping room.

RAFAEL. The Señor here will vouch for me.

MIGUEL. Go where you were told. I will make the necessary apologies to the Señora. [ANNA *exits.*] Haven't you more sense than to come here?

RAFAEL. You told me to report before you left for Madrid. I went to the Calle de San Pedro and they told me you had come here. Where else was I to go?

MIGUEL. Taking the chances you do it's a miracle you've kept your neck out of the garrotte so long. One of these days your star will desert you.

RAFAEL I'm not nervous about my neck. Why should you be?

MIGUEL. What did you find?

RAFAEL. Nothing.

MIGUEL. Nothing?

RAFAEL. Not a cursed thing. You're afraid of shadows.

MIGUEL. There is no such thing as a shadow without an object to cast it.

RAFAEL. Why should he turn up now?

MIGUEL. With the nomination falling tomorrow his reappearance would be sardonically timely. [RAFAEL

laughs.] Your manners don't seem to serve you as well as usual.

RAFAEL. My manners are all right. You needn't be concerned about them. I understand you and you understand me without a lot of bowing and scraping. One word from you and off goes my napper. One word from me and off goes yours. Manners! Bah! They make me sick.

MIGUEL. You've been drinking again.

RAFAEL. What if I have?

MIGUEL. With the shadow of a steel collar before your eyes you can still afford to be careless?

RAFAEL. While the collar is only a shadow why shouldn't I amuse myself? And when the shadow becomes a reality what could be more consoling than a bottle of wine?

MIGUEL. You fool. There's a car turning into the drive. Go at once.

RAFAEL. At your service, Señor. [*Goes toward the door.*]

MIGUEL. No! By the balcony.

RAFAEL. By the balcony. How romantic. [*Goes to window.*] I shall hear from you at Madrid?

MIGUEL. Within a week.

RAFAEL. Good-night.

MIGUEL. Good-night. Good-night.

[RAFAEL *disappears over the balcony.* MIGUEL *takes out a cigar and lights it. There is a short pause and the door opens.* REVETTE *enters, followed by* MARION, COUNTESS OF WYANOCK

and HUBERT LANG. REVETTE *is tall, slim, an aristocrat. She has a way of looking straight ahead of her as though she glimses things beyond the vision of ordinary people.* MARION *is a chic American. She is taller than* REVETTE, *blonde and handsome. She is voluptuous in a discreetly corsetted way.* HUBERT LANG *is an Englishman, immaculately turned out.*]

REVETTE. [*As she enters.*] Can you see, Marion? The staircase is awfully dark.

MARION. We won't stay more than a few minutes. I know you are dying to get to bed.

REVETTE. No. Not if you'll stay and talk to me. Or better still let me talk to you. Be careful of that archway, Hubert.

HUBERT. [*As he bends to enter the low door.*] Thanks. I will.

MIGUEL. [*Coming down from balcony.*] Good evening, Countess. Captain Lang.

HUBERT. Good evening, Sir.

MARION. Well, this is a surprise. I thought you were at Madrid.

MIGUEL. No. I leave tonight [*To* REVETTE.] and I didn't want to go without coming to say goodbye.

REVETTE. I'm sorry that I was not here when you came.

MIGUEL. That you should have been in such pleasant company compensates me for a much greater inconvenience than waiting. You are looking very beautiful tonight, Countess.

MARION. Thank you.

MIGUEL. And your distinguished husband? I hope he is better?

MARION. Yes, Charles is much better, thanks. He has had quite a siege but he expects to be back from England on Thursday. He'll probably put in an appearance at the Embassy next week.

MIGUEL. I'm delighted to hear it. I see Spain still has its lure for you, Captain Lang.

HUBERT. Oh, rather! I shall probably become a fixture in time. I find Spain very peaceful.

MIGUEL. Then that siren on your car must be a relic of your barbarous past.

HUBERT. On the contrary. It's quite new. A little invention of my own. You see the drivers here in Seville don't take the least notice of ordinary motor horns so I had to think up something. Don't you find it effective?

MIGUEL. Oh, most. Now I do hope you won't think I'm rude but I have only a half hour to catch my train and I should like a few words with my wife.

MARION. Oh, of course. Of course. We must be running along anyhow.

REVETTE. Oh, must you go?

MARION. I must. I have a train myself at nine in the morning and you know what a glutton I am for sleep.

REVETTE. Well, don't stay away too long. You know how I always miss you.

MARION. I won't. And I'll let you know the minute I get back.

REVETTE. Please do. Good-night, dear.

MARION. Good-night, Don Miguel.

MIGUEL. Good-night, Countess.

MARION. I salute the new minister of the interior.

MIGUEL. The new minister of the interior salutes you. Good-night, Captain Lang.

HUBERT. Good-night, Sir.

REVETTE. Good-night, Hubert. Next Thursday then?

HUBERT. Righto! I've got it down in my little book. [*They go out.*]

MIGUEL. The Countess rather likes Captain Lang?

[REVETTE *strokes idly the feathers of a huge peacock-feather fan.*]

REVETTE. Why not? He's quite charming.

MIGUEL. It's quite possible that the situation may become somewhat embarrassing for everybody concerned when Lord Wyanock returns.

REVETTE. [*Still stroking the fan and without looking up.*] Why have you come here at this hour of the night?

MIGUEL. Is it ever too late for a husband to pay his wife the compliment of calling on her?

REVETTE. [*With a half shrug.*] Why have you come?

MIGUEL. First, because I have no intention that any one shall suppose that your leaving my house was anything more than an artist's fad, for which you have my sympathy and approval. Is that clear?

REVETTE. Quite clear.

MIGUEL. And, secondly, because I wish to assure myself that you are conducting yourself with discretion.

REVETTE. Is that all?

MIGUEL. No. I also wish to remind you that on my return from Madrid I shall expect you to have entirely recovered from this attack of temperament. I have humoured your whims until now because—well, because

it has pleased me to humour them. And because I did not wish to draw attention to my domestic affairs until after my nomination. Do you understand what I mean?

REVETTE. I think I do. I think you mean that on your return for Madrid you expect me to come back to you.

MIGUEL. Exactly. I expect my wife to be my wife. And by the way, my dear, you're looking very charming tonight. I begin to be sorry that my train goes so soon.

[REVETTE *turns her back with a shudder at the leer in his eyes. He follows her to the window and attempts to take her in his arms. Very quietly she disengages herself.*]

REVETTE. I don't want to quarrel with you but I do want you to understand that you must never try to touch me again. That is all over.

MIGUEL. What a naive child it is. Or perhaps you have already found someone to console you for my sins.

REVETTE. If you're trying to make me angry by hitting in the dark you're wasting time. All I ask of you is that you will please leave me alone. I had thought that I'd found sanctuary here.

MIGUEL. Sanctuary! You talk like a cloistered nun and you must forgive me if I am unable to regard you as nunlike. I shall expect you at my house when I return.

REVETTE. I shall not be there.

MIGUEL. You refuse to obey me?

REVETTE. Please don't be melodramatic. Of course—after all, you know, it's you that are responsible for this state of affairs.

MIGUEL. Are you going to bore me with another recital of your wrongs? Haven't I had enough of your jealous tirades?

REVETTE. Jealous tirades? I don't think jealousy is the word. Æsthetics, perhaps.

MIGUEL. Æsthetics! Well, at any rate I'm glad to be spared another scene.

REVETTE. Really, you're very unjust. The only scene I ever made was on the occasion of your first—what shall we say? disaffection? That time I admit I did make something of an exhibition of myself. I cried. I cried all through the night. I cried till the dawn came in. Do you know, that night I didn't think I could go on living—but I did. I lived to wonder whether it was really I that could suffer like that. Mercifully emotion is like elastic: you can stretch it just so far and just so often—then its capacity for resiliency goes. Mine went that night.

MIGUEL. Indeed?

REVETTE. Since then the only horror I've experienced has been æsthetic horror. You know how sensitive I've always been to perfume. Since then I've simply objected to your coming to me with the perfumes of all those other women still in your hair.

MIGUEL. Disgusting!

REVETTE. Yes, some of them were. But why let us go over all that again? That's past and done with. That road's been trodden and now the caravans move on; mine to the North. Yours, to Madrid. Oh, and speaking of Madrid, you have none too much time for your train.

MIGUEL. You seem to be extraordinarily solicitous

about my train. However, as you say, it is almost due. I hope that you will be discreet in your behavior during my absence. You may continue to amuse yourself with your painting and with the delusion that you have defied me to advantage, but I shall expect to find you at the Calle de San Pedro on my return. That I insist upon. Do you hear me?

REVETTE. Yes, I hear.

MIGUEL. And one thing more. I notice that you still have that little prostitute Marietta with you. Get rid of her. I don't want to find her here when I get back. I don't intend to have gossip either through her or through my wife's neurotic ideas of saving fallen angels from the streets where they belong. If you misunderstood my orders seven weeks ago see to it that you don't misunderstand them now. Good-night.

REVETTE. Do you know I think you lack a sense of humour?

MIGUEL. Indeed?

REVETTE. Yes. Particularly when you apply the term prostitute to any woman. Oh, and by the way how is Doña Paula? Well, I hope.

MIGUEL. Is that intended as an insult?

REVETTE. Why? If I don't accept the term prostitute as applied to Marietta as an insult, why should you accept it for Doña Paula, or Doña Claudia, or a legion others?

MIGUEL. Do you compare a kitchen wench with Doña Paula?

REVETTE. Not at all. Doña Paula is a business woman. She exacts a fee in return for her services. Marietta asked only love. And she got tears.

MIGUEL. You're ridiculous. However, I've told you what I want and what I expect. See that you do it.

[MIGUEL *takes his hat and stick and goes toward door.* REVETTE *stands facing the fire, her back to him. She speaks without turning.*]

REVETTE. Oh! Be careful of that staircase. It's very dark and you may fall.

[MIGUEL *exits.* REVETTE *stands for a moment. Then with a slight shrug of the shoulders and a little bitter laugh, she goes toward the window.* ANNA *enters.*]

ANNA. Thanks to the Saints. The Señor has gone. Is my Señora cold?

REVETTE. Not in my body.

ANNA. May the devil take the Señor Don Miguel. May I take your things, Señora?

REVETTE. [*Handing fan to* ANNA *and coming down to divan.*] Thank you. Oh, Anna, who was that man that I saw going out of the gates as we drove in?

ANNA. I don't know, Señora. He had some business with the Señor.

REVETTE. Business. Here? Strange! What a horrible face. [*She sits on the divan and commences to draw the ear rings from her ears.*] Did Josélito come for the frame?

ANNA. Yes, Señora. But it wasn't quite ready. He said he would come again in the morning.

REVETTE. Thank heaven that picture's out of the way at last.

ANNA. The Señora doesn't sound as though she were pleased with it.

REVETTE. Pleased with it? I'm not pleased with it.

ANNA. Oh, I think it is a beautiful picture. But the Señora is always dissatisfied with her work; although people that are supposed to know praise it and the collectors pay big money for it.

REVETTE. What has that to do with it? You see, Anna, when one creates something the principal thing is to get as near one's vision as one can, money or no money. Now if I could be satisfied once, just once, with something that I had done—that would be a wonderful sensation.

ANNA. The Señora is too hard to please.

REVETTE. Well, I suppose that's the penalty of seeing visions and dreaming dreams. One always feels how great the vision was and how paltry the realization. [*She rises abruptly and turns toward the window.*] What a wonderful night! I used to read about the blue moonlight of Spain. I never believed that it could be so blue. [*She opens wide the casement and stands silhouetted against the blue sky.*] Can you smell the orange flowers?

ANNA. I wouldn't keep the casement open, Señora.

REVETTE. What! Shut out such a night!

ANNA. There are many bats flying tonight. One might fly in.

REVETTE. Well. And supposing one does?

ANNA. It is unlucky for a bat to fly into a house.

REVETTE. [*Laughing.*] For the bat or for the house?

ANNA. It's all very well, Señora. But the very night my husband died, a bat flew through the open doorway.

REVETTE. O Anna!

ANNA. [*Between beating the pillows and folding the coverlet.*] Yes, Señora. It was a dark night without any stars. I had been sitting for a long time watching my Alfredo as he slept. His face was puffed and bloated with fever. He was snoring like a whole litter of pigs with his mouth wide open—God! if men only knew how they look when they sleep.

REVETTE. I do thank God I've never seen myself asleep.

ANNA. Well, Señora, I was just about to put out my hand to give him his last dose of medicine for the night, thinking that maybe he'd take a turn for the better and hang on for years and years when a bat flew right in front of my face. I said to myself, "Who am I that I should resist an allwise providence?" I drew back my hand.—The next night I was a widow. [*Crossing herself piously.*] It was meant to be.

REVETTE. Oh! Anna! Anna! And I thought I'd cured you of superstition. Listen! Do you hear that nightingale singing? Does that mean something too?

ANNA. My Señora always laughs at me.

REVETTE. But, Anna. Isn't it wonderful that I can still laugh at something? But there, I won't laugh at you any more, I promise. I love you too well.

ANNA. Will my Señora have something to eat? Marietta has made sandwiches of caviare and she has brought up some wine.

REVETTE. Is the wine white or red?

ANNA. Red wine of Rioja. Good Spanish wine.

REVETTE. Red wine always makes me think of blood; the blood of all the heroes and of all the passionate lovers that ever lived. And tonight's the night of lovers, isn't it?

ANNA. Yes, Señora. The feast of St. Anthony falls tomorrow.

REVETTE. And tonight through all Spain prayers are travelling up that love may come to all lonely hearts. May any gods there be send peace to all loneliness.

ANNA. I say Amen to that, Señora! I have prayed to the blessed St. Anthony to send the Señora a lover. Oh! it may be a sin but that is what I have prayed this very night.

REVETTE. I appreciate your thought for me. But if it's just as convenient for St. Antony I hope he'll wait now till tomorrow.

ANNA. The Señora will have her little joke.

REVETTE. No, I grant you this is a night for romance; a night when with the moon and with the orange flowers for company, the pressure of strong arms might be very welcome.

[ANNA *having completed the unfastening of her dress,* REVETTE *turns suddenly and goes into dressing room.* ANNA *brings small tabouret to the chair and places on it the tray of sandwiches and wine. She lights a candle shaded with plum colored silk and places that on the bed table. A few seconds elapse and* REVETTE *re-enters. She is attired in a sleeping robe of white silk crêpe. Over it is a negligée of silver with a very long train. A cap of silver lace is on her head.*

She goes to the casement and stands for a few seconds more looking out into the night. ANNA *shakes her head ruefully. The clock is heard to chime. The nightingale gurgles a few throbbing notes.*]

ANNA. Will the Señora drink her wine now?

REVETTE. [*Turning from window.*] I'd forgotten there were such things as food and wine.

ANNA. What did the Señora see in the moonlight?

REVETTE. Just moonlight. And the long shadows of the cypress trees on the grass. I tried to see past them. I tried to see deep into the future, but I couldn't and perhaps after all it's just as well. [*Taking glass from* ANNA *and holding the wine against the light.*] Well, here's to St. Antony! Patron saint of lonely people.

ANNA. [*Fervently.*] Amen.

REVETTE. You know, Anna, for a man hater you're the most diligent matchmaker I've ever encountered.

ANNA. I don't hate men, Señora. God made them and who am I to question the handiwork of God. I don't like husbands, that's all.

REVETTE. And yet they do say that a second marriage is a triumph of hope over experience.

ANNA. Anyone that has been married knows there is no hope.

REVETTE. You're a true disciple of Voltaire.

ANNA. Voltaire, Señora?

REVETTE. He was the gentleman that said: "If you're married and happy, there's nothing like it. And if you're married and unhappy—"

ANNA. He was right, that Señor Voltaire. There is nothing like it.

REVETTE. That makes me sure then of always keeping you with me.

ANNA. The Señora knows I would never leave her willingly.

REVETTE. Dear Anna. Salt of the earth. [*She puts out her hand.* ANNA *bends and kisses it.*] And now it's time for bed. It was selfish of me to have kept you up so long.

ANNA. Will the Señora take off her negligée?

REVETTE. No, I'm going to read. You must call me at seven in the morning, Anna. I've a long day's work to put in tomorrow.

ANNA. Yes, Señora.

REVETTE. Will you please pass me that little red book on the table.

ANNA. Is this it, Señora?

REVETTE. Thank you. The candles please. Good night, Anna.

ANNA. May the blessed virgin watch over and protect you. Good-night, Señora.

[ANNA *goes out.* REVETTE *strikes a match and with it lights a cigarette. She watches the tiny flame until it burns close to her fingers. With a sigh she lets it fall. She opens the book and turns the pages idly. The song of the nightingale is very sad, the wailing of the guitar player is sadder still. She rests her head upon her hands, her elbows on her knees. Again she tries to read.*

Then she takes the book in one hand, the candle in the other, and goes toward the book stand. She kneels before it, examining one by one the volumes. A shadow falls across the floor. A figure is seen at the casement. Even in the soft gloom one senses the power and purpose of this man's personality. He watches the kneeling figure. The train of her gown spreads itself like a great fan of silver across the patch of moonlight. She selects two of the books from the stand and rises to her feet. As she turns she catches sight of CESAR. *The light from her candle lights up his olive face. She shows no alarm, only a great wonder.*]

CESAR. Not a sound unless you want me to use this gun.

REVETTE. If you do use it I hope that you'll shoot straight. Life isn't so entertaining for me at the moment that I want to go on disfigured into the bargain.

CESAR. You're very cool.

REVETTE. The evening is chilly, especially so for June.

CESAR. You will pardon my apparent discourtesy. If I were sure that you wouldn't raise the rest of the house, I'd help you with your burden.

[*Indicates books and candle stick.*]

REVETTE. I appreciate your thoughtfulness but I beg you not to inconvenience yourself.

CESAR. Permit me. [*He takes books and candle from her and goes toward the bed table. As he turns his back*

to put them down REVETTE *makes a dart to the door.*] Come away from that door! [REVETTE *with a slight shrug obeys.*] I repeat, you are very cool for a woman.

REVETTE. Why particularly for a woman? What do you expect a woman to do? Scream and be shot? That would be somewhat weak logic under the circumstances, wouldn't it?

CESAR. One does not look for logic in addition to the many other charms of your sex, Señora.

REVETTE. I'm afraid your knowledge of my sex has been gained by hearsay. Or possibly from the reading of fanciful conceits, written by your own.

CESAR. I must confess that my personal knowledge of women has been slight.

REVETTE. That excuses your ignorance of us. Well, you may set your mind at rest. I shall not scream; principally for the reason that I should gain nothing by screaming. You see, I have only an old woman in the house, and a young girl that expects very soon to be a mother. One would be foolish to suppose that you might take that into consideration.

CESAR. I beg you to believe that fate, not lack of chivalry, forces me to profit by your disadvantage.

REVETTE. In that case—my jewels are on that table.

CESAR. Strange as it may seem, Señora, I am not interested in your jewels.

REVETTE. No?

CESAR. No.

REVETTE. Do you know, I'm rather disappointed. I've been paying insurance on them for years. I have no money in the house. [*As* CESAR *makes no move.*]

Oh! You don't mean to say that you have come for one of my yet unsold masterpieces.

CESAR. Masterpieces?

REVETTE. Pictures. I'm an artist. At least I hope I am. Didn't you know?

CESAR. No, I didn't know.

REVETTE. Oh! Then I cannot imagine anything else I possess that could be a reason for your call.

CESAR. Your possessions are not the reason for my call, Señora.

REVETTE. Then you're not a bandit?

CESAR. Not in that sense, no.

REVETTE. Then what are you?

CESAR. It's a wise man that knows what he is.

REVETTE. That's very true. But epigrams won't get us far this time of night. Will you—

CESAR. I have no desire to get any farther than this.

REVETTE. My house is flattered. But it is late and I do not feel equal to entertaining.

CESAB. I'm sorry that you are tired.

REVETTE. I did not say that I was tired. I said that it was late.

CESAR. [*As* REVETTE *crosses to the other side of the room.*] Then I don't feel quite so guilty.

REVETTE. If you've merely come here on a sort of St. Antony's Eve prank just to disturb my night's rest, I can assure you you have succeeded admirably. I shall not sleep tonight. Now won't you please be so kind as to go?

CESAR. That's impossible, Señora. I am obliged to demand the hospitality of this room for the remainder of

the night. [*As* REVETTE *turns to door of dressing room.*] Stay where you are.

REVETTE. I was merely going to that room since you insist upon this one.

CESAR. Do not trouble, Señora. I prefer that we both stay here.

REVETTE. But if you don't want my jewels, what do you want here?

CESAR. Should you be disturbed by even later callers than I, I should be more certain of your discretion.

REVETTE. I have already assured you of that.

CESAR. Still I propose to stay where I am.

REVETTE. [*Indicating divan.*] Very well, if we are to spend the night without sleep there is no reason why we should spend it standing into the bargain. [*She sits.*]

CESAR. The Señora honors me too much. And yet—it would be more flattering if you were to show a little emotion, a little fear.

REVETTE. Fear! Of what? Of death? Oh! there are so many things worse than death. Life, for example. No, since I must die sometime, I have accustomed myself to the idea of dying, when the time comes, instead of making any useless fuss. If that time has come, so be it. All I ask is that if you have anything to do with it you make as clean a job as possible.

CESAR. You're a very unusual person.

REVETTE. Do you think so?

CESAR. You're very different from what I expected you to be when I saw you at the Inn of the Black Bull?

REVETTE. When was that?

CESAR. Tonight. I've been watching you all the evening. When you left I followed you here.

REVETTE. Such gallantry might amuse some women, Señor. It leaves me quite unmoved.

CESAR. At any rate you know now why I came.

REVETTE. And I do you the compliment of not taking you seriously.

CESAR. I might remind you that your sense of humor is not general. I never was more serious in my life. I came as I say because I wanted to know you. I wanted also to know the wife of the ex-Chief-Justice of Sevilla, the prospective Minister of the Interior.

REVETTE. What has Don Miguel to do with it.

CESAR. Don Miguel—just a fancy, Señora. You are very beautiful, Señora. [*He takes both her hands, making it impossible for her to move.*]

REVETTE. How dare you touch me!

CESAR. I thought you were beautiful at the Inn, but you are much more beautiful here in the moonlight.

REVETTE. Let go my hands.

CESAR. Do you hear that nightingale? Do you smell the orange flowers? I was standing in the shadow of your balcony when I heard you say that with them for company you would welcome the pressure of strong arms.

REVETTE. Let me go.

CESAR. Your eyes are like stars under the white veil of a cloud. You are proud and white like the silver peacock in the garden of Marie Louise. And yet you could be tender if you would.

REVETTE. Let me go.

CESAR. Look at me. Look at me. You are like a

lioness in the jungle. You look at me and you're not afraid. Your body is like the rising moon. Your mouth is redder than blood. Kiss me.

REVETTE. Let me go.

CESAR. If you will say to me, "If I were a lioness in the jungle, free of all the subterfuges of men and women, still I would say 'No!'" then I will let you go. You do not say it.

REVETTE. Even if I were a lioness in the jungle I would not be taken against my will. I would use my teeth and my claws.

CESAR. You would not use them. You would not use them.

REVETTE. I would not be taken against my will.

CESAR. I would make my will your will.

REVETTE. Not by attacking me in my den armed.

CESAR. Kiss me of your own free will and I'll let you go.

REVETTE. How can I use my free will while you hold me.

CESAR. [*Letting go his hold of her and rising to his feet from the divan.*] Kiss me.

REVETTE. [REVETTE *is evidently amazed. She turns her head and looks up into his eyes. In her eyes there is a dawning of desire. She lifts her face until it is very near to* CESAR. *Then very quietly she says.*] No.

CESAR. I could break your body like a reed.

REVETTE. Still I should not have kissed you.

CESAR. [*Turns away abruptly for a second.*] Then tell me this. Is it because of circumstances, conventions, or because you do not—like—me?

REVETTE. Even supposing that there were no such thing as convention, even supposing that I did—like—you, do you think that I should take for a lover, a man that breaks into my house at midnight and orders me at the point of a gun?

CESAR. I love you.

REVETTE. Love! Love is scarcely born of such a situation nor with quite such a suddenness.

CESAR. Who shall say how love is born? When the stars shall look down on your dust and mine, what shall time have mattered? What is a day, a year, in the span of eternity? I love you, Señora. I shall prove it. [*He takes his gun from his belt and holds it out to her.*] With this gun I give you my liberty, perhaps my life. You may shoot me for a bandit. The law will uphold you. You may call your women and send them for the Guardia Civil, or better still you can go to the casement and call. There are those waiting outside that would be only too glad to relieve you of all responsibility by putting a bullet through me on sight.

REVETTE. Who are you? What kind of a man are you? Why are you being hunted?

CESAR. Let us say that I have had certain differences with certain gentlemen who are of the opinion that my life is forfeit to their whims.

REVETTE. And yet you put that life in my hands?

CESAR. Not as an apology, Señora, but as evidence of my love.

REVETTE. [*Walks deliberately over to him. They stand looking into one another's eyes. Then very quietly*

she indicates the chair facing the fireplace.] You will find that chair comfortable till dawn. [*She stands for a moment looking out into the moonlit night. Then she turns.*] Now perhaps you won't think me rude if I try to rest? I have work to do tomorrow.

[*She goes over to bed and stretches herself upon it.*]

CESAR. If ever you need this poor life of mine, it is yours to keep or to throw away.

[REVETTE *holds out her hand.* CESAR *goes over to the bed. He bends his head and kisses it. Then he goes back to his chair and taking a match, he prepares to light a cigarette. There is a stir outside the door.* REVETTE *motions him to sit down so that he may be hidden by the tall back of the chair. The door opens and* ANNA *enters.*]

ANNA. Pardon, Señora, but I thought I heard voices; that someone was here; perhaps the Señor Don Miguel had come back?

REVETTE. Don Miguel is on the way to Madrid.

ANNA. Pardon, Señora. But I was afraid. May the blessed St. Antony watch over and protect you. Good-night, Señora.

REVETTE. Good-night, Anna. Don't forget to call me at seven.

ANNA. I won't forget. Good-night, Señora.

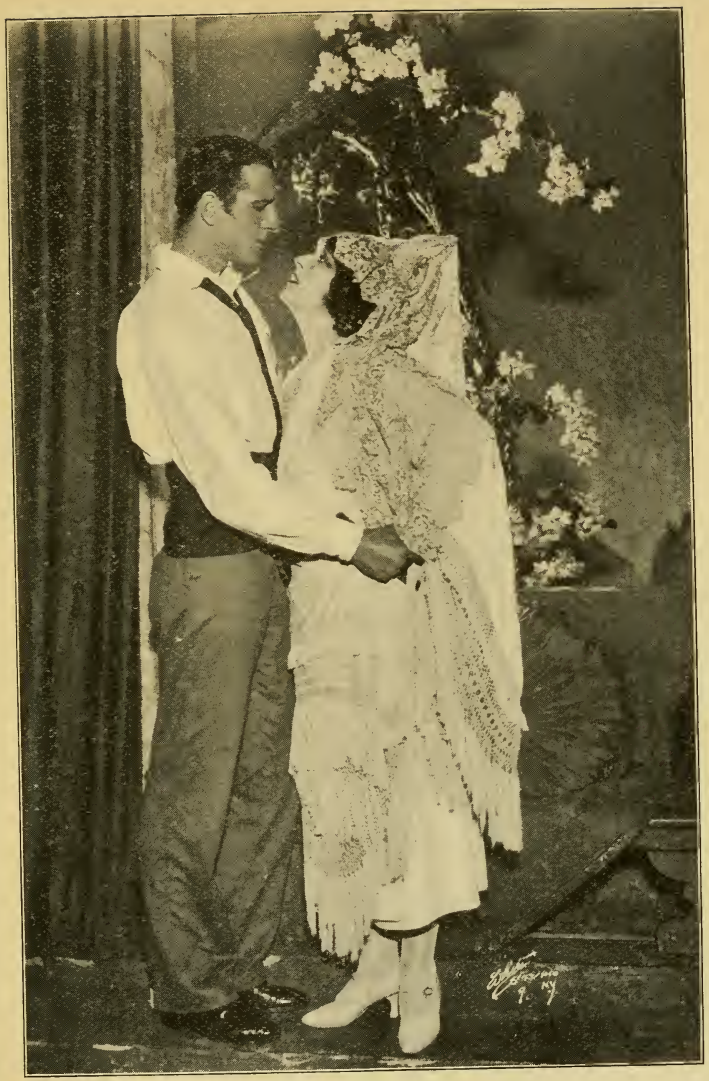
REVETTE. Good-night, Anna.

[ANNA *goes out. The nightingales pierce the stillness with a new chorus of song. The guitar player wails again his love to the moon.* REVETTE *bends her head and blows out the tiny flame of the candle. The room is peopled with shadows. The air is heavy with perfume.*]

REVETTE. You may smoke now, Señor.

[*The glow from a match stabs the gloom as the curtain falls.*]

ACT II



ACT II.

It is the studio in the house of REVETTE *seven weeks later. The walls are a soft sand color that catches and throws back the sunlight. Set in the wall at the right there is a niche holding a Virgin and Child, fashioned of blue plaster. Just above the niche there is a long, arched window; shaded by curtains of a deeper shade of blue silk. On the ledge under the window there is an orange colored bowl, containing a sheaf of paint-brushes. There is a second bowl of peacock hue containing a bunch of scarlet geraniums. A smock of scarlet cotton hangs on a nail by the window.*

There is a tall easel on a line with this window. On the easel there is a huge canvas, covered with a linen cloth. There are many other smaller canvases, turned with their faces to the wall. Below the window there is a divan. It is heaped with cushions of purple, blue and green. At the back of the divan there is a small table on which stand a box of paints, another jar of brushes and other implements of a painter's craft.

At the back of this room there are two wide French doors. To the left there is a staircase leading to the change room, REVETTE'S *private apartments of the house. The handrail of this staircase is hung with strips of brilliantly hued brocades, one blue, the other scarlet.*

To the left of the staircase there is a big fireplace. Near the fireplace is a table bearing two candlesticks of twisted blue Bohemian glass. The candles are also blue.

Below the fireplace there is a chair curiously carved. A strip of crimson silk is thrown across its back. On a line with the chair there is another window through which the sun is streaming.

At the rise of the curtain ANNA *is discovered putting some red roses into a vase.* MARIETTA *enters and starts to ascend the staircase. She seems nervous and excited.*

ANNA. Where are you going, Marietta?

MARIETTA. I want to speak with the Señora Anna.

ANNA. The Señora is busy writing letters and you know she doesn't like to be disturbed.

MARIETTA. But, Anna, it's most important.

ANNA. It's much more important that you should go down to the market. I need that macaroni for dinner.

MARIETTA. Very well, Anna. [*She starts to go out as* REVETTE *enters down the stairs.*]

REVETTE. Good morning, Marietta. I suppose it's afternoon though. Isn't it? My watch has stopped and I've been so busy I haven't had time to come and look at the clock.

MARIETTA. It's just four, Señora.

[MARIETTA *pauses; looks back at* ANNA *as though making up her mind whether she shall speak before her or not.*]

REVETTE. Why! What's the matter, Marietta? Aren't you well?

MARIETTA. I'm quite well, thank you, Señora.

REVETTE. Then it's the baby. There's something wrong with him. Anna must give him something. Anna knows all about babies.

MARIETTA. The niño is well, Señora. He's as strong as a young bull at the corrida of Corpus Cristi.

REVETTE. I haven't seen him for two whole days. He must have grown quite a lot in that time. Eh, Marietta?

MARIETTA. He has grown—really he has, Señora; and today he laughed. Before, he has only smiled. His laugh was so gay. It almost made me cry.

REVETTE. What sort of logic's that, that makes a happy mother cry when her son laughs. You are happy, aren't you, Marietta?

MARIETTA. It is just because I am so happy that the tears came to my eyes. I couldn't help thinking what might have happened to the little one and to me if it hadn't been for the Señora.

REVETTE. There now, you're not going to cry again?

MARIETTA. If I could only repay the Señora somehow?

REVETTE. There is nothing to repay. If I have done anything at all I have done it to please myself. There's nothing very noble about pleasing one's self.

MARIETTA. The Señora is to me like my saint.

REVETTE. I'd rather be something more tangible. Your friend, Marietta. There now. I want you to go for me to the Calle de San Sebastien. If Don Isidor should be in, tell him that I should be glad if he will come and pose this afternoon.

MARIETTA. Yes, Señora. [*She hesitates again.*]

REVETTE. What is it, Marietta?

MARIETTA. May I have a few words with the Señora before I go?

REVETTE. You may have as many as you like when you get back.

MARIETTA. Yes, Señora.

[MARIETTA *goes out and* REVETTE *turns to ascend the staircase.*]

ANNA. Oh, I forgot to tell the Señora that a servant came a few minutes ago from her ladyship. He said her ladyship would call at four if it would be convenient.

REVETTE. And I was going to paint. Still I'm glad her ladyship is back. Anna, you must make for her ladyship some of those little honey cakes that she likes so well.

ANNA. Doesn't the Señora remember the last time her ladyship was here she said she wouldn't eat any cakes or sweet things until she had lost at least six pounds.

REVETTE. Yes, I remember. But her ladyship will forget when she sees your cakes. [*As there is a knocking at the door.*] There's someone now.

[REVETTE *goes to upper room.* ANNA *goes out through main door and returns with* MARION *and* HUBERT LANG.]

ANNA. Will her ladyship be seated; also the Señor. I will tell the Señora that you are here.

[ANNA *goes to upper room.*]

HUBERT. Well, if I were you I'd let well enough alone.

MARION. That's just it. It isn't well enough. It isn't well at all. It's bad; bad enough for anything.

HUBERT. She has the courage of her convictions at any rate.

MARION. People with convictions are the most irritating of the entire species.

HUBERT. That is when their convictions don't happen to be the same as yours.

MARION. You can't raise an argument with me today. It's too hot.

HUBERT. I don't see that she's done anything particularly extraordinary.

MARION. I don't know what you'd call extraordinary then. The wife of the prospective Minister walks calmly out of her husband's house with a servant that's going to have an illegitimate baby, takes up her residence in an improvised studio miles from anywhere, and signs her cheques in her maiden name.

HUBERT. She painted and signed cheques long before she married de Ribera, didn't she?

MARION. That has nothing to do with it. She must have known that as the wife of a Spanish hidalgo she wouldn't have the same freedom as an unattached artist. Oh, dear! How I shall miss her little dinners at the Calle de San Pedro. Revette had the only decent chef in Sevilla. This Spanish cooking—ugh—

HUBERT. Well, I suppose losing one's friend and a cook at the same stroke is something of a cataclysm. But can't she give her little dinners here?

MARION. You know perfectly well she can't. What do you think people are going to say? They'll cut her as sure as fate.

HUBERT. Looks to me as though she's done the cutting. I don't wonder she left him. He's an awful person.

MARION. Oh, there's no doubt he's behaved disgracefully. But there—all husbands behave disgracefully. She should have expected it.

HUBERT. Being a callow bachelor I don't take that assertion seriously.

MARION. You talk beautifully, Hubert. But if you were married you'd be just as impossible as any other husband.

HUBERT. That brings us to something that I'm going to say to you today for the last time.

MARION. Oh, dear! I hope you're not going to be tiresome.

HUBERT. What are you going to do about Charles?

MARION. What can I do?

HUBERT. Leave him. Divorce him and marry me. Let me take care of you. I haven't a title, it's true, although I believe there is one knocking about somewhere in the family.

MARION. Now don't start that all over again, Hubert. Things are very pleasant as they are and I see no reason to change.

HUBERT. They're going to change. I'm absolutely fed up with coming to you in another man's house. You'll have to make up your mind between us and you'll have to make it up today. [REVETTE *enters.*]

REVETTE. Sorry to have kept you waiting, Marion. Hello, Hubert! How are you?

HUBERT. Fit as a fiddle, thanks. And you? One needn't ask how you are. You're looking simply splendid.

REVETTE. I do wish you'd come here oftener.

HUBERT. Really? Why?

REVETTE. You're always so comforting. You're looking lovely, Marion.

MARION. Thanks. So are you. I expected to find you pale and peaked but you're not. I expected to find you with cropped hair and flat heels, now that you've really made up your mind to be independent and all that sort of thing.

REVETTE. Thank heaven, my independence doesn't live in my heels.

HUBERT. May I smoke?

REVETTE. Certainly.

HUBERT. Thanks.

REVETTE. What an adorable hat. Paris?

MARION. No! Vienna!

REVETTE. I like it. Yes, I like it. What time did you get back?

MARION. At two. The first thing I did was to send a message to you.

REVETTE. It was nice of you to have made me your first thought.

MARION. If I hadn't I suppose I might have stayed away forever. I should never have had a word from you.

REVETTE. I've written to you twice. That's marvellous for me. Anyhow you know you're always welcome.

I've told you so. As for me you know I never go anywhere.

MARION. You're developing into a positive hermit.

REVETTE. I've developed.

HUBERT. That's odd. I should think you'd have stacks of friends. Simply stacks of them.

REVETTE. Whenever I hear of people having stacks of friends I'm perfectly sure in my own mind that they have none. Have some tea, Marion? Mr. Lang, being English, must be quite lost without it.

MARION. I can't speak for Hubert. But I mustn't—beside we had lunch on the train. It was awful.

HUBERT. Quite awful.

REVETTE. Then tea should have a double appeal.

HUBERT. I hate to smash one of the most cherished ideas of the American people with regard to Englishmen, Marion. But I never drink tea and I've never even seen a Bath bun.

MARION. Oh, I have. They're delicious—all golden brown with the dearest little pieces of sugar all over them. But—I mustn't eat them. I mustn't think about them.

REVETTE. Why not?

MARION. Oh, I've started another course of banting; the tenth this season. I've lost two ounces in as many months.

REVETTE. [*As* ANNA *enters with tray.*] Here we are. Sure I can't tempt you, Marion? Anna has made some honey cakes especially for you, and since you've had no lunch—

MARION. Honey isn't fattening, is it?

REVETTE. It's positively emaciating.

HUBERT. That's like Marion. She cries tears as big as pigeon's eggs at refusing watery soup which she hates, only to fall victim to marrons glacées by the pound after dinner.

MARION. You needn't laugh. Ten years from now you'll be doing the same thing yourself. Then your waistline, which at present is your principal asset, by the way, will be lost in one of those ponderous paunches that distinguish the portraits of your ancestors.

[ANNA *having assisted with the tea goes out.*]

HUBERT. Well, ten years from now I shall be famous, and my faults will be viewed through fame's gentle haze. They will be regarded as virtues or at any rate as eccentricities. Isn't that so, Revette?

REVETTE. I'm no authority. Although they do say that a contented waistline begets a contented mind. What more can you ask of mere success?

HUBERT. There may be something in that.

MARION. Hubert, won't you go to Pachichi's for me and see if he has those new books of Wainwright's that I ordered. On the way back you might stop for me.

HUBERT. Now? Do you want them now?

MARION. Yes, I want them now.

HUBERT. [*Disgustedly.*] Oh, very well. Is there anything I can do for you, Revette?

REVETTE. No, nothing, thanks.

HUBERT. [*To* MARION.] Is there anything else you want?

MARION. No, that's all.

HUBERT. Then I suppose I'd better be going.

[*He goes out.*]

MARION. Thank heaven. I thought he'd stay and talk forever.

REVETTE. He's very much in love with you, isn't he?

MARION. I've come to talk about you; not about me.

REVETTE. That's comforting. Well, tell me all about your trip.

MARION. The only part of my trip that I want to talk of is Madrid. I was there.

REVETTE. I didn't know you were going to Madrid.

MARION. Neither did I when I left here. But Charles came back unexpectedly so of course I had to go. I saw Miguel—

REVETTE. Oh, did you?

MARION. I suppose you're going to say that I have no business concerning myself with your marital affairs. But I'm going to tell you what I think just the same.

REVETTE. My dear Marion, the greatest privilege of friendship is to tell one's friends unpleasant truths. Now—

MARION. Revette! I'm afraid of him. I do wish you'd go back before he comes.

REVETTE. For the sake of argument merely—why?

MARION. He'll do you some injury; I know he will. Let him find you at the Calle de San Pedro when he gets back. Not here! You know of course that he's leaving Madrid tonight?

REVETTE. No, I didn't know.

MARION. Well, he is. Oh, Revette, do go back. I'm afraid he'll do something terrible to you if you don't.

REVETTE. Nothing could be so terrible for me as going back.

MARION. Well, he'll make you go back, whatever you say.

REVETTE. How?

MARION. You're in Spain now, not America. The law is on his side. The law will make you go back. Oh, what's the use of having a scandal, perhaps worse, for nothing. Besides—

REVETTE. And now what is it?

MARION. [*Glancing at picture.*] Do you think you ought to have male models coming here?

REVETTE. Why not? When I'm on a picture I am really too occupied with my subject to waste any time as to its sex.

MARION. Yes. But that one is so handsome?

REVETTE. He is called Don Isidor Perez. He hasn't been here for a week. A fact, by the way, that has put me very much back on that picture. As to his being handsome. Well, I'm painting Abelard. What would you, a gargoyle for a model?

MARION. Miguel may not be so impersonal.

REVETTE. Miguel has lost any right to criticize anything that I may do, from painting a handsome model to taking him for a lover.

MARION. Is he your lover?

REVETTE. No.

MARION. Are you particularly interested in him?

REVETTE. He's the most intelligent man I've ever met. His companionship has come to mean a great deal to me. But he's not my lover.

MARION. You've spent some thought on him at any rate.

REVETTE. Quite a little.

MARION. Well, I suppose that being an ordinary model he wouldn't have the impertinence to make love to you. Has he ever made love to you?

REVETTE. Not since the first time I saw him.

MARION. The first time you saw him! The first time! Well . . .

REVETTE. Now having disposed of the handsome model and of Miguel, let's talk of something pleasant.

MARION. We haven't disposed of Miguel; even if we've disposed of the handsome model. Miguel is absolutely determined that you shall go back. Well, I certainly don't understand you. Of course this studio is very nice and all that kind of thing. But that beautiful house in Madrid—

REVETTE. I didn't suppose that you would understand. And it isn't easy for me to explain things that are deep inside me, even to you—but one of these days, Marion—I'm going to get drunk. Then I shall become totally irresponsible and perhaps my tongue will loosen.

MARION. You're impossible. Of course, I'm not foolish enough to think that Marietta was really the cause of the final breach. After all you can't really blame Miguel. Now, can you? Almost any man would have done the same.

REVETTE. I daresay you're right. Miguel is a profound hypocrite.

MARION. Most of us are.

REVETTE. All of us are. Even poor David uttered something of a bromide when he confided to the Almighty that all men are liars.

MARION. What have you done with her?

REVETTE. Done with her? What do you mean—done with her?

MARION. I mean. Where is she?

REVETTE. Here.

MARION. What?

REVETTE. Of course. What did you expect me to do with her? Turn her out with her baby under her arm to starve, like a good old melodrama? No. Since nature and an incomprehensible social order have forced this baby on her the only thing to be done now is to make her shoulder her responsibility; let her work and support it.

MARION. Well, upon my soul—

REVETTE. The baby's here too.

MARION. Revette!

REVETTE. Yes. And you ought to see it. It's the most gorgeous thing in life. It's a HIM. It was his birthday yesterday. He was four weeks old. Really, Marion, he's a very beautiful baby. He has two great black eyes, just like Marietta's, and two soft little baby hands. Really, to look at him you'd think he was the most legitimate baby on earth.

MARION. Well!!

REVETTE. He has no marks that set him apart from legitimate babies.

MARION. Don't you care at all for what people think?

REVETTE. To tell you the truth, no. After all, if I were to live my whole life solely to please other people

I couldn't succeed in pleasing all of them. If I were to take out my heart and give it to the vultures, they would only complain and say, "Oh, what a little heart." No, I've come to the conclusion that if I please myself I shall at any rate succeed in pleasing one person. If I try to please other people I shall finish by pleasing neither them nor myself.

MARION. You've never been ostracised yet. You don't know what it means.

MARION. Those that love me won't ostracize me and why should I care about the others?

MARION. You're very hard.

REVETTE. I'm not hard at all. I'm not maudlin.

MARION. And you won't go back and meet Miguel peaceably when he arrives?

REVETTE. No.

MARION. And there's no one else?

REVETTE. Not at present.

MARION. That's the extraordinary part of it. You speak most dispassionately of all sorts of moral lapses but it's only your brain that's concerned; never your body.

REVETTE. For the reason that I have met no one that combines beauty, that is the introduction, with understanding, that is the invitation to the banquet, and intelligence that pours the wine. And when I shall find this *rara avis,* what shall he see in me?

MARION. Well, I had some arguments that seemed excellent when I came in; but arguments that would appeal to any normal woman don't even interest you.

REVETTE. Oh yes, they do. They interest me very much. You see I seem so natural to myself until I hear

someone speak as you speak and then I begin to wonder whether I'm mad, or whether the rest of the world is. Do you mind if I go on with my work?

MARION. Not at all. I love to see you paint. I have an enormous admiration for any one that can paint. My face is as far as I have ever been able to get. [*As* REVETTE *is putting on a smock and preparing her materials* MARION *goes to the painting, which she regards for a moment or two.*] Well, he's certainly handsome.

REVETTE. Yes. Do you like it?

MARION. It's marvellous. [*Turning abruptly from painting.*] Oh, Lord! I wish I could do something.

REVETTE. Ah! you, too. At last. You're in love with Hubert, aren't you?

MARION. I like him, yes.

REVETTE. Is that all?

MARION. As a matter of fact, no. Oh, dear, it's a complicated world.

REVETTE. What are you going to do?

MARION. What can I do?

REVETTE. Divorce Charles, of course.

MARION. Revette!

REVETTE. Well, why not? He's given you cause enough, heaven knows. And you're not married to a Spaniard, you know.

MARION. Oh, divorce is a filthy business. It washes the dirt in instead of out of your clothing and tears the fabrics to tatters in the process. Besides, I'm not the same lawless spirit you are. And I've paid dearly enough for the privilege of being Lady Marion Wyanock.

REVETTE. I shouldn't think you'd want his name nor anything else belonging to him.

MARION. Oh! It's all very well for you. Your maiden name, Dubowska, looks as well on a cheque as de Ribera. But think of Higgins—Marion Higgins.

REVETTE. Well, even at that I don't think Higgins is so bad. It *is* your name and it's easy to spell. 'Pon my soul I'd rather finish up with Higgins on the tombstone than to lose my identity as the "BELOVED WIFE OF." No, I think Higgins is rather nice. Charles is still interested, I take it, in the lady.

MARION. Oh, yes. In fact with several of them. There's one young person at the Gaiety called Lily May, or May Lily; something like that—that's worse than Higgins.

REVETTE. Much worse.

MARION. He's just bought her a sable coat. I suggested it. I was continually missing different little odds and ends and I thought that perhaps I might miss my sables some day into the bargain. May I smoke?

REVETTE. Certainly. The cigarettes are on that table.

MARION. Thanks. I have my own. Oh, I wouldn't mind that so much. One expects infidelity. But he gets so disgustingly drunk.

REVETTE. And so you just go on and on.

MARION. I must. What sort of a future should I have if I left him? No, I shall let Charles go his way and I shall go mine.

REVETTE. With Hubert Lang?

MARION. Discreetly, let it be said.

REVETTE. Yes. You're right. It is a complicated world. It all seems so unnecessary to me.

MARION. That's because you don't hold with convention.

REVETTE. No, I don't. You know to me Convention is like a widow that wears crepe to her knees and scarlet in her heart.

MARION. Well, we can't all flaunt our scarlet in public, you know.

REVETTE. No. And that's one of the saddest things in the world. The color scheme of our convention is as grey as our hypocrisy. But there's one thing certain, these conventions are undergoing some extraordinary evolutions these days. Sooner or later conventions as we know them will have turned a complete somersault.

MARION. And when's that going to be.

REVETTE. When all women become economically independent. When they are taught to support themselves. Economic independence must be the salvation of women.

MARION. Well, it'll be the damnation of men. And what would you suggest for me? Driving a bus?

REVETTE. You're always so literal, darling.

[HUBERT *enters. His arms are full of packages. He has also a bunch of gardenias.*]

HUBERT. [*Presenting the flowers to* REVETTE.] I thought you might like these, Revette, so I brought them along.

REVETTE. That's awfully nice of you.

HUBERT. Sorry to have been so long, Marion.

ANNA. [*Entering.*] The model is here, Señora. Shall I tell him to come in?

REVETTE. No. Ask Don Isidor to wait for a moment.

HUBERT. Well, I must be going. This will be good-bye for a time, Revette. I'm leaving tonight for Paris.

MARION. Hubert.

REVETTE. Haven't you made up your mind rather suddenly?

HUBERT. As a matter of fact, no. I've been thinking about it for some time. However, I actually decided to go while I was at the booksellers.

MARION. You don't mean that you're really leaving tonight.

HUBERT. On the eight-thirty.

MARION. I think you're behaving disgracefully.

HUBERT. I'm sorry.

MARION. Revette, I appeal to you. He's doing this just because I won't raise a scandal by going off somewhere, heaven knows where, with him while they tear my reputation to shreds.

HUBERT. That isn't what I said at all. I didn't say you had to go anywhere with me.

MARION. Then what did you say?

HUBERT. I said that you'd have to leave Charles. If you say so I won't even see you again until I meet you two minutes after the divorce is signed before the marriage notary.

MARION. Revette. Tell him—

HUBERT. Charles or me—from now on.

REVETTE. Let her have time to think, Hubert. After all, for Marion this is a serious step. Don't force her to do something on the spur of the minute that you may both be everlastingly sorry for.

HUBERT. Spur of the minute—Good Lord, I've been telling her this for months. Marion must know her own mind by this time. She's got to choose and she's got to choose now. [*Turns to* MARION.] Which is it to be? [MARION *hesitates.*] Very well. [*He turns to go.*]

MARION. [*Sharply.*] Hubert.

REVETTE. Give her till tonight, Hubert. Your train doesn't go till eight-thirty.

HUBERT. If I wait till then I'll get no sleeper, and I've lost as much sleep as I intend losing.

REVETTE. Then another few hours won't mean much.

HUBERT. [*After a moment's pause.*] Very well. Till eight; not a minute later.

MARION. Are you going to drive back with me, Hubert?

HUBERT. I'll drive with you as far as the hotel.

MARION. Well, goodbye, dear. And, Revette, do think over what I've said. Although of course I know you won't.

REVETTE. No, I won't. Let me hear from you tonight.

MARION. Yes. Goodbye again. I'm sorry to have made a scene.

REVETTE. Goodbye. Goodbye, Hubert.

HUBERT. Goodbye.

[*They go out.* REVETTE *turns again to her painting.* MARIETTA *enters.*]

MARIETTA. May I speak to the Señora now?

REVETTE. Yes.

MARIETTA. Señora, I met Josélito, the porter, at market this morning and he told me something that I think the Señora ought to know.

REVETTE. What is it?

MARIETTA. It's about the model, Señora.

REVETTE. About Don Isidor?

MARIETTA. Yes, Señora. Josélito says that is not his name. Josélito says that the Señor is Don Cesar, the son of Don Gaspar de Mendoza y Gonzales. He was sentenced to death for the murder of his father twelve years ago but broke gaol a few days before the execution should have taken place.

REVETTE. Impossible.

MARIETTA. That's what I told Josélito. But Josélito seems quite sure. He says that he was sentenced to death by the Señor Don Miguel. He says that it is not safe for the Señora to let him come here.

REVETTE. But what makes Josélito think this?

MARIETTA. He recognized him from the painting the last time he came here to the studio. Josélito worked as page in the house of Don Gaspar at the time of the murder. He as well as others didn't believe him guilty but—I thought I had better tell the Señora before she sees him.

REVETTE. Of course. Of course. Ask him to come in. [*As* MARIETTA *starts to go.*] In the meantime don't speak of this to anyone. Gossip's ugly; whether it happens to be true or not.

MARIETTA. I won't speak of it to anyone, Señora.

[*She goes out.* REVETTE *is plainly moved. Love for* CESAR *and fear for his safety can be read in her eyes.*]

CESAR. [*As he enters.*] It was so good of you to send for me.

REVETTE. When I sent for you I'm afraid I was very selfish. I was thinking only of my picture.

CESAR. Since you did send for me I don't care why you sent. These days have been like days spent in prison. I've existed, not lived.

REVETTE. I appreciate your having come at all. Fortunately the picture will be finished today.

CESAR. You are angry.

REVETTE. No, I'm not angry.

CESAR. What is it? What have I done? What is it? Tell me, please.

REVETTE. The first day that you came here to pose for me I told you that I should never ask you any questions. If I were to say now what is in my mind I should be forced to break my word.—Don Cesar de Mendoza y Gonzales! [CESAR *with heels together, bows low.*] Then you are Cesar de Mendoza y Gonzales?

CESAR. Since you ask me, yes.

REVETTE. And you've come here to this house time after time in open daylight! Are you quite mad? Have you forgotten that it was Don Miguel who passed sentence on you?

CESAR. No, I have not forgotten. That is one of the things that I shall never forget.

REVETTE. I don't understand.

CESAR. My excuse for coming that night was because of the fact that you were the wife of Don Miguel.

REVETTE. Still I don't understand.

CESAR. That night at the Inn of the Black Bull when I looked at you, I loved you. It seemed to me that I have always known you; that you had come back

to me after a long absence; not that I was seeing you for the first time. I had an almost uncontrollable impulse to come over to your table, but I remembered who and what I was. I knew I could never even speak to you, much less be anything to you, and I felt more bitter against fate than I had felt in all the years of my exile. Then I heard someone mention your name. I saw red. The man that had made a hell of my life had the right to hold you in his arms in peace and safety. I said to myself: she belongs to me. I followed you—

REVETTE. And you were recognized by the police. It was they that were following you that night?

CESAR. No. Two civilians who thought they recognized me and who would have been very willing to have sold me to the police for five thousand pesetas. God, what men will do for five thousand pesetas! I suppose I should have told you all this long ago. But I knew that you'd forbid me to come here again. I'd have done anything to prevent that.

REVETTE. You should have told me. You should have told me. Oh, why have you taken such a terrible risk in coming here?

CESAR. I have risked my life so often during these years for nothing, that to see you, to be with you, was worth risking two lives, if I had them.

REVETTE. But—

CESAR. What?

REVETTE. Still I don't understand why you should have been so bitter against Don Miguel. After all, when he sentenced you, he was only the mouthpiece of a jury.

CESAR. Don Miguel was responsible for my father's death.

REVETTE. What are you saying? What do you mean?

CESAR. You may not know that it is expressly forbidden that a justice should engage in trade. Thirteen years ago while my father was in office Don Miguel was very active in some shady shipping deals at Barcelona. Of course he was wise enough not to appear in the matter in his own person; but rogues fall out. He couldn't play fair even with them. The result was that a letter implicating Don Miguel fell into my father's hands. The next day my father was killed.

REVETTE. But why didn't this come out at the trial.

CESAR. I didn't know it until long after I broke gaol. Then it was too late.

REVETTE. I've been in Spain only four years. I was not here at the time of the case. How was it they convicted you?

CESAR. The verdict was given on what looked like incontrovertible evidence. After all, it was plain enough. Patricide is an ugly crime in Spain.

REVETTE. What was the evidence?

CESAR. It was known in Sevilla that my father and I quarrelled, quarrelled frequently. The night he died we had had a more violent disagreement than usual. I made threats that didn't sound well when they were repeated in court by the servants with interesting elaborations. That night I left him in a passion. I went to my room and I went to sleep. About one o'clock I was awakened by noises downstairs. I got up and went down. As I got to the door of my father's reading room, I heard

a shot. I opened the door just in time to see my father fall and a man disappearing through the French windows. I was amazed to see my own gun lying within a few feet from the body. I stooped to pick it up. The servants came in, and there I was with the gun in my hand.

REVETTE. But the man— Didn't you have him followed?

CESAR. Yes. But he'd disappeared as completely as though an earthquake had swallowed him. If it weren't that I saw him again a little more than a year ago in a gypsy dive in Granada I might think I'd been the victim of a hallucination.

REVETTE. You saw him again at Granada?

CESAR. Yes, Granada is very popular with criminals. They all turn up there sooner or later. Oh, but why should I weary you with my story!

REVETTE. Oh, please! Please! You're sure that it was the same man that you saw at Granada?

CESAR. One could never forget that face. He has a deep scar that runs from the left temple clear to the chin. That night as I entered the dive he was entertaining a party of cut throats as drunk as himself, at a table facing the door. I recognized him immediately. He was boasting of his bravery, of his exploits, of his conquests among women. Among the party there was a pretty gypsy girl called Maraquita that he seemed anxious to impress. She called him Lightning. Since then that name has figured prominently in the newspapers as the coolest and bravest bandit in Spain.

REVETTE. Lightning. Yes. Yes, I have read of him.

CESAR. Well, I went over to his table and offered to

stand for the next round of wine. He accepted and offered me a chair. By degrees I led him to speak of Seville. He told the story of my father's murder with the most ghastly details and was furious with Don Miguel for the price he'd paid him for the job. He even passed round a knife with the arms of our house "Après Moi Quoi?" engraved on the handle. It seems he has a craze for collecting souvenirs of his victims. Suddenly for no apparent reason he became suspicious; although I was known in the house, and I was disguised so that my own mother wouldn't have known me. The feeling spread to the others and before you could count three I was outside on my head. When I came to I was lying at the gates of the Alcazar and the sun was shining. Since then I've followed him from one rumour to another. I followed him here nine weeks ago and— Well, now you know. You say nothing, Señora?

REVETTE. What can I say? What is there to say? But oh! how could you have been so mad as to have come here?

CESAR. Since that night when I was mad; mad enough to come to you in the way I did, I have only lived for the time when I was to see you again. That night I tried to make myself believe that ordinary justice gave me a right over you; but when you looked at me; when you spoke—then I knew that I loved you, that I wanted you only if you wanted me. Then when you told me I might come and sit for you it seemed that for the first time in twelve years, the clouds lifted and the sun shone out. Since then nothing else has mattered but you, not even the man I came to find, not even death.

REVETTE. Don't! Don't! Don't you realize what your death would mean to me? I shouldn't have allowed you to come here. If you are captured it will be because of my own colossal carelessness.

CESAR. Would it mean anything more to you than that?

[*As he speaks* MARIETTA *enters. She is terrified. She clasps and unclasps her hands as she tries to control her voice.*]

MARIETTA. Señora, Señora!

REVETTE. What is it? What is it, Marietta?

MARIETTA. The Señor Don Miguel.

REVETTE. [*Stands for a moment transfixed. She turns an agonized face to* CESAR. *Then very quietly.*] Where?

MARIETTA. Downstairs, Señora. What shall I do?

REVETTE. Is the Señor in the house?

MARIETTA. Yes, Señora. [MARIETTA *goes out.*]

REVETTE. Please go. Go at once.

CESAR. I should only run into his arms. I'll stay.

REVETTE. No, you can go by the balcony.

CESAR. I want to see Don Miguel again.

REVETTE. Is it courage to put your head in the mouth of a lion?

CESAR. I don't very much care.

REVETTE. Once you told me that if ever I needed your life it was mine. I need it now.

CESAR. Please don't ask me to run away from your husband.

REVETTE. Don Cesar, I need this room alone. My husband may have things to say to me that he will not care to say before a stranger.

CESAR. I did not mean to be discourteous. I will wait in the change room.

[CESAR *goes up stairs.* REVETTE *takes up her palette and brushes, and with trembling hands goes back to the canvas.* MIGUEL *enters. He smiles disagreeably as he sees her at work. As he crosses to the foot of the staircase he catches sight of* CESAR'S *hat. He pushes it idly with the point of his stick.*]

MIGUEL. Your welcome is scarcely cordial, my dear.

REVETTE. It isn't easy for me to pretend.

MIGUEL. Sometimes it's advisable. You don't even express surprise that I am back some days before I was expected.

REVETTE. It isn't for me to say when you shall come and go from Sevilla.

MIGUEL. It is difficult to believe that a dutiful wife can show such coldness at the return of an absent husband. Or is that you have forgotten that you are my wife?

[*He makes a sudden movement to take her in his arms.* REVETTE *throwing down her brush strikes him full across the mouth.*]

REVETTE. I warned you never to touch me again.

[*For a moment she stands very quietly recovering her poise. Then she crosses to the opposite side of the room. At first* MIGUEL *is furious. Then his lips curl in a saturnine smile.*]

MIGUEL. How amusing! We resort to primitive tactics like a peasant with her first lover. But you needn't be so coy with me, my dear. I don't need that kind of stimulation.

REVETTE. If you have any reason for coming here, will you please let me know what it is? If you have no reason, will you please go and let me get on with my work?

MIGUEL. You will need some covering for your head. Then we will go.

REVETTE. I thought I had already made it quite clear that I had left the Calle de San Pedro for all time.

MIGUEL. You talk like a child. Do you really think you have any voice in the matter at all? Little wives that will not wive can be made to wive.

REVETTE. I would rather die than go back to you.

MIGUEL. That is your privilege. Your duty is to obey me.

REVETTE. Duty! Duty! You should be the last person in the world to use that term. And yet there was a time when I didn't understand the meaning of that word either. I thought once that duty meant submission, even at the price of logic, of self respect. That's what made me carry on for as long as I did. While everything I reverenced, every ideal I had, you held up to ridicule, laughed at and insulted. You made my body a thing to shudder

at. I was afraid to be alone with my own soul. Then one day I saw the light. That was the day when you would have sent that poor child Marietta away, without a thought as to what might become of her. And for what? After all, for what? For doing what you do whenever it pleases you to do it. Then I knew that duty is the thing I owe to my conception of what is just and decent. Thank God, I've a trade, but even if I hadn't I would rather have gone out and scrubbed floors than lived one other day under the same roof with you.

MIGUEL. The stage should have been your *mètier*, Doña Revette, not painting. However, private theatricals bore me to extinction. You've been fed and clothed. You've had the privilege of bearing my name, and as long as you bear that name I'm going to see to it that you bring no disgrace upon it. For the rest my time is limited and my patience exhausted. Come.

REVETTE. I shall not go from here.

MIGUEL. Do you really think I'm going to permit you to stay here, with your lover?

REVETTE. I have no lover. I wish to God I had.

MIGUEL. You harlot.

REVETTE. Yes, you're right. To have lived with you under your roof, to have been fed and clothed as you say and to have given my body in payment, despising you as I did, that was the essence of harlotry. But that's all over now. Now I'm eating my own bread. I'm living under my own roof.

MIGUEL. Alone?

REVETTE. Alone.

MIGUEL. Liar. [*He turns to the stairway.*]

REVETTE. Where are you going?

MIGUEL. I'm going to ask your lover if he isn't tired of hiding in there.

REVETTE. I've told you I have no lover.

MIGUEL. Swear it. No, don't. I wouldn't take a woman's oath on the cross.

REVETTE. Very well, open that door. And you'll make yourself so ridiculous that all Spain will laugh at you.

MIGUEL. You swear that there is no one in there.

REVETTE. My model is in that room. When they told me that you were here I asked him to go in there and wait. I knew we should have just the sort of a scene we have had and even I have no desire to have my affairs discussed in every tavern in Sevilla. Well, open the door and see if what I tell you isn't true.

MIGUEL. No. Since this is your house and since this is your model, it would be unbecoming of me to take upon myself that authority. You must open it.

[*As he speaks the door opens and* CESAR *comes out.* REVETTE'S *back is to the door. At the sound of his voice her face stiffens with horror. It is some seconds before she regains command of herself.*]

CESAR. If the Señora doesn't need me any more today, I may go?

REVETTE. I'm sorry to have kept you waiting beyond your hour. Yes, you may go.

MIGUEL. One moment. The fault is mine. I'm sorry to have delayed you in your work. Still the light will serve for another hour. I will come back. By the way, my dear? I have always under-rated your powers as an

artist. It is really an excellent portrait. [MIGUEL *picks up his hat and stick. He walks slowly to the door. Then he turns.*] I trust you will be ready when the carriage comes. In an hour.

[MIGUEL *exits. Both* REVETTE *and* CESAR *stand motionless until the lower door is heard to slam.*]

REVETTE. Oh, why did you come out? Why?

CESAR. There are limits to my self control. Another second and I should have stuck a knife in him.

REVETTE. If he has recognized you, it means your death.

CESAR. If he'd recognized me he wouldn't have gone.

REVETTE. Don Miguel is a strange man. He never lets his right hand know what his left hand is going to do.

CESAR. He didn't recognize me.

REVETTE. I am afraid!

CESAR. Is it because you care for me that you are afraid?

REVETTE. Care!

CESAR. [*Taking her in his arms.*] Since I first saw you I have prayed that I might see that look in your eyes.

REVETTE. I love you.

CESAR. Say it again.

REVETTE. I love you.

CESAR. Even the executioner can't take that from me.

REVETTE. You must leave Spain, now! today!

CESAR. You can't send me away.

REVETTE. You must go; don't you see that you must?

CESAR. I'm not asking you to share my exile.

REVETTE. Exile? How could there be any exile for

me where you are. Do you think anything could prevent my leaving with you now, except that while alone you may stand some chance of safety, with me you never could. You suggested some memory to Don Miguel. I know it. I feel it. Even if he didn't absolutely recognize you. If we were to go now to the end of the world he'd find us. If he were to see you again, that suspicion would become a certainty. He'd have a double reason then for delivering you up to justice. Unless you leave Spain now while you have a chance, he'll get you sooner or later and I shall have helped to tie a noose around your neck with my own hands.

CESAR. If you love me how can you ask me to go?

REVETTE. It is because I do love you that I do ask it. All my life I have prayed that just such a love as yours might come to me. All my life I've prayed for just such an understanding as we have known in these few short weeks. And now my prayer is answered in the person of a man whom to love would be to destroy. Like Moses I'm led to Pisgah and I may not enter the promised land. You've called me proud, a peacock. If ever I had any pride it's all gone now. My pride is in the dust. My wings are broken.

CESAR. That I should have brought this suffering on you.

REVETTE. Don't say that. Please don't say that. You've brought me the only thing in life that really matters. It's worth any price. This suffering is only fear for you. If I could be sure that you were safe I would do anything, give anything, be anything. Nothing could hurt me any more.

CESAR. I won't go.

REVETTE. What can I say to you? What can I say?

CESAR. Nothing.

REVETTE. Listen to me. Please listen to me. For my sake, not for yours. Leave Spain. Don't give me the awful torture of living from day to day, from hour to hour, from minute to minute, with the knowledge that you are always in danger, that at any moment you may be taken. I couldn't bear it, I couldn't. To lie awake at night and say: "Perhaps even now his body is being carried back to Sevilla and I can do nothing. Not even see him." I should go mad. If you go now, America, Australia, anywhere, you would be safe from them. Later when things have quieted I could come to you. In the meantime I must find a way; there must be some way to clear you of this awful thing.

CESAR. Do you think I would let you come to me unless I were cleared? Do you think I would let you ruin your life with the shadow that hangs over mine? The only chance I have of ever being anything to you lies in my staying here. They say the day of miracles is past and only a miracle can bring this to pass. I promise I won't run any unnecessary risks. More than that I cannot say. You know where to find me when you want me.

[CESAR *takes her hand and kisses it passionately.* REVETTE'S *head is bowed upon the other arm and she does not look up.* CESAR *goes out. The sound of* REVETTE'S *weeping stirs the soft hush*

of the room. After a few moments MARIETTA *enters. She has a letter on a salver in her hand. She regards her weeping mistress.*]

MARIETTA. Is my Señora ill?

REVETTE. No. No, Marietta.

MARIETTA. A letter for the Señora from the Señor Don Miguel.

[REVETTE *takes the letter. Her eyes are full of dread and despair.*]

REVETTE. Thank you.

[MARIETTA *goes out.* REVETTE *regards the letter, afraid to read it, and yet afraid not to read it. She tears the envelope. She rises to her feet. It is apparent from her expression that the note contains news that* CESAR *has been either recognized or captured. She crushes the letter in her hands. At first her voice is almost a whisper, then it rises almost to a scream as the curtain falls.*]

No, no, no.

ACT III

ACT III.

It is a room in the house of Don Miguel *in the Calle de San Pedro. It is lofty and spacious. Red is suggested in the hangings and in the upholstery. At the back of the scene is a double window, the wings of which open out. Below it is a wide window seat heaped with crimson cushions. Trailing vines hang from the embrasure. Against the walls are low Moorish stools, with carved and inlaid legs. To the right there is an inlaid table. A high carved chair is on one side; a lower chair on the other. To the left there is a divan. The time is twilight of the same day as the previous act.*

At the rise of the curtain Miguel *is discovered seated at the table. He examines some papers. Every now and then he raises his head and gazes at the clock before him. His manner is irritated, impatient. Then he rises; takes one or two hurried turns about the room. Stopping suddenly in his perambulations, he goes to the bell rope and pulls savagely. A few seconds, and* Pedro, *an aged servant, enters. He carries a tray of wine and glasses. He puts them on the table.*

Pedro. A thousand pardons if I kept the Señor waiting.

Miguel. Don't waste more time in apologies.

PEDRO. Shall I pour some wine for the Señor?

MIGUEL. No, no wine. Give me some brandy. [*As* PEDRO *pours the brandy, he overturns one of the glasses with a slight tinkle.*] Lout.

PEDRO. Pardon, Señor. My hand trembled.

MIGUEL. When servants become so old that their hands tremble they are of no further use to their masters.

PEDRO. Pardon, Señor. It was an accident. I am not well today.

MIGUEL. Then see a doctor.

PEDRO. Can a doctor make one sleep without dreaming?

MIGUEL. Dreams! Grandmother's tales.

PEDRO. It is not of my grandmother that I dream, Señor. It is of the Señor.

MIGUEL. So you excuse your negligence while you are awake by dreaming of me when you're asleep.

PEDRO. Last night I had a terrible dream of the Señor. It has been with me all day. [MIGUEL *sips his wine abstractedly.*] I dreamed that the Señor was a boy again. And I thought that the old Señor, his father, was alive. I dreamed that the Señor was playing with the little dog Rey; the one that died of rat poison. The Señor remembers? Suddenly as I watched, the dog turned into a tiger. I called to the Señor to run. The Señor only laughed and put out his hand to the beast. Then I saw it crouch, ready to spring. I wanted to throw myself in between, but I wasn't brave enough. I turned and ran. I heard a crunching of bones and I screamed and screamed. I woke screaming. All the day that dream has been with me.

MIGUEL. You're getting into your dotage. You may go.

PEDRO. There is a caballero downstairs that wishes to see the Señor, Don Rafael Roderiguez.

MIGUEL. Why didn't you say so before? Show him up.

PEDRO. Yes, Señor.

[PEDRO *goes out. He returns with* RAFAEL. RAFAEL *has been drinking and has reached the swaggering stage. He is inclined to be quarrelsome.* PEDRO *stands as though awaiting fresh orders.* MIGUEL *turns to him curtly.*]

MIGUEL. I am not at home. See to it that I'm not disturbed by you nor by any one else until I ring.

PEDRO. Very well, Señor. [PEDRO *goes out.*]

MIGUEL. Well?

RAFAEL. Twenty-two Calle de San Sebastien. Name —Isidor Perez.

MIGUEL. Whom did you leave to watch?

RAFAEL. Manuel Cortez. He's dear, but he's worth it. He'll stick closer than a creditor.

MIGUEL. What time did you leave?

RAFAEL. About seven.

MIGUEL. And it's taken you all this time to get here?

RAFAEL. I had some business.

MIGUEL. When I need you, all other business must be put aside including the business of women and wine-bibbing.

RAFAEL. Who says so?

MIGUEL. I say so. How many times am I to warn you that wine will be the means of putting your neck into a steel collar one of these days?

RAFAEL. I know what I'm doing. I'll take care of my neck.

MIGUEL. Men that drink and consort with promiscuous women can never take care of their necks.

RAFAEL. Then you'll take care of it for me.

MIGUEL. I certainly will. Even if I have to put you where you'll no longer be a menace to the public safety.

RAFAEL. Me a menace? Me! That's very good. [*He laughs drunkenly, and suddenly becomes ugly.*] And you're a fine one to talk about promiscuous women after what I know. After what I've seen here in your own house. You and your fancy girls. Promiscuous women! Ho! Ho! And what do you mean: "you'll put me?" Better than you have tried that before now.

MIGUEL. Do you want the whole house to know your business?

RAFAEL. I don't care who hears. Besides, no one can hear from this room. You've seen to that. Nice thick walls—top of the house—everything for comfort and—safety. [*Commences to sing.*]

MIGUEL. Quiet, you fool.

RAFAEL. Who's a fool? Don't call me a fool.

MIGUEL. What else are you? In a crisis like this you can calmly disappear for an hour and then turn up half drunk.

RAFAEL. I'm not drunk. I'm sober. Absolutely sober. See my hand. It doesn't move now. Does it? If you think I'm drunk now you ought to see me tomorrow. I'll be drunk then—drunker than hell. And don't tell me what I should do and what I shouldn't do.

MIGUEL. I'm not telling you to do anything. I'm simply suggesting that for your own sake it might be as well to be ordinarily discreet.

RAFAEL. I have been discreet. I left him in charge of Cortez. He hasn't a chance on earth to slip Cortez.

MIGUEL. He gave his warders the slip twelve years ago.

RAFAEL. Well, he won't slip Cortez. Anyhow, am I a cat that I should sit to watch mouseholes? I found the hole. That's enough for one day.

MIGUEL. And the mouse was found for you. If you'd had any sense you'd have found the hole ten weeks ago when I told you he was rumoured in Sevilla.

RAFAEL. Oh, rumours, rumours! I'm sick of rumours. Besides, didn't I search every hole and corner that a respectable criminal would hide in? How was I to know that he'd be such a fool as to choose a place like the Calle de San Sebastien; nice and quiet as though he were a college professor; walking in and out as calm as you please, just waiting for some one to recognize him and turn him over to the police and collect five thousand pesetas.

MIGUEL. You're sure of Cortez, speaking of rewards?

RAFAEL. He isn't going to be so foolish as to give him up for five thousand when he's been promised ten.

MIGUEL. If you'd been more thorough, he wouldn't have had to have even that.

RAFAEL. I tell you I was thorough. Some one had to be in on it, hadn't they? And, if it comes to thoroughness, you didn't show any particular thoroughness either. He just walked into your arms, like a child to its nurse.

And then you didn't recognize him till you'd had time to get downstairs to your carriage. And if you hadn't had a coachman to leave on watch while you got me, he'd have slipped us both. And if I hadn't been at home when your message came your recognizing him wouldn't have done any good as far as catching him is concerned. It was I that followed him up and down every alley in Seville to the Calle de San Sebastian. It was I that sewed him up so tight that he has as much chance of getting out as a one horned bull has of goring Chicquello the matador. Thorough—well—

MIGUEL. I'm not discrediting your share in the matter.

RAFAEL. And you'd better not. Well, now we've got him, what do you want to do with him?

MIGUEL. There's one thing certain. He mustn't fall into the hands of the police. There might be a reopening of the trial. That would be suicide for us both.

RAFAEL. Well, he don't have to fall into their hands. Have him croaked accidental like.

MIGUEL. That won't do either. There are other complications.

RAFAEL. What complications?

MIGUEL. The Señora de Ribera. How much has he told her?

RAFAEL. He wouldn't be such a fool as to tell her anything.

MIGUEL. A man in love is always a fool.

RAFAEL. In love?

MIGUEL. Don Cesar is in love with my wife.

RAFAEL. In love with your wife? Phew—the devil and the deep blue sea!

MIGUEL. Precisely. Whichever way the thing goes now there's bound to be publicity. Of two evils we can only choose the lesser.

RAFAEL. And what's that?

MIGUEL. To see that that publicity reflects as advantageously as possible on me.

RAFAEL. How?

MIGUEL. How far the thing has gone I don't know, but I do know that it's gone far enough on his side to make him willing to risk his neck to do her a service.

RAFAEL. I don't see—

MIGUEL. He must have heard my conversation with my wife this afternoon. He must have heard me order her back to this house and heard her refuse. Now if he were to believe that she had been brought back here forcibly—

RAFAEL. [*Whistles softly.*] He'd fly like a bird to its mate.

MIGUEL. Exactly. Now public opinion is very indulgent to husbands that take vengeance on faithless wives and on the men that have dishonored their homes. Retribution is not murder.

RAFAEL. How will you get her here?

MIGUEL. [*Taking letters from pocket.*] If I were to promise free passage out of Spain to Don Cesar I think that she would come.

RAFAEL. What did you say in your first letter?

MIGUEL. Merely that I had recognized him and that we had him under guard. [*Giving* RAFAEL *the two envelopes.*] This is for Don Cesar. Deliver that first.

This is for the Señora. Now hurry and see that you don't bungle this time.

RAFAEL. Bungle! Me bungle? When did you ever know me to bungle?

MIGUEL. It was your cursed bungling twelve years ago that's responsible for this mess now.

RAFAEL. Well, I like that. Bungle! Well! I got the lettter for you, didn't I? I saved you from being kicked out of office, didn't I? I did my part of the business. I murdered and robbed him. And I got the letter. That was the principal thing. And if the Premier were to know even now about those leaky ships and the money you coined—

MIGUEL. Of which you got more than your share.

RAFAEL. What you gave me, you mean. If the Premier were to find out—

MIGUEL. There isn't a piece of actual evidence in existence against me.

RAFAEL. There's me.

MIGUEL. You wouldn't be quite such a fool.

RAFAEL. That depends—that depends— What do I get for this job?

MIGUEL. I'll tell you when the "job" is completed. You'll get what's fair and equitable.

RAFAEL. You don't think I'm going to stand on your ideas of equity, do you? I want sixty thousand pesetas and I want them now.

MIGUEL. Don't be absurd.

RAFAEL. Sixty thousand pesetas. That's what I want. I'm getting tired of this killing business. It's lost its

novelty. I want to retire and settle down quiet and respectable like a caballero. Like you, for instance.

MIGUEL. Sixty thousand pesetas. Are you crazy?

RAFAEL. No, I'm not crazy. I want my money.

MIGUEL. Less noise.

RAFAEL. I want my money—And don't talk to me as though I were your inferior. I'm as good as you are. Better. Talking to me as though I were a bloody scoundrel and you a little, white wooly lamb. We're brothers—brothers in blood. In Don Gaspar's blood.

MIGUEL. There's no object in getting excited over anything so trifling as social distinctions. Our interests are alike, our safety mutual; so long, that is, as you are reasonable. I'll give you forty thousand pesetas—twenty tonight and twenty thirty days from now. Not a peseta more; not a peseta less.

RAFAEL. I won't take them.

MIGUEL. Oh, yes you will.

RAFAEL. I want sixty thousand pesetas.

MIGUEL. And I'll give you forty. Judas sold Christ for less, and he hadn't the same interest—safety. Well?

RAFAEL. You needn't think I shan't get even for that other twenty.

MIGUEL. I hope we may both live long enough for you to keep your promise. And now you'd better be getting on. This must be settled tonight.

RAFAEL. Tonight. It will be. It will be.

[RAFAEL *rises from the table forgetting the knife with which he has been whittling his nails through the latter part of the scene. He goes*

out. MIGUEL *pulls open a drawer of the table and takes from it a gun which he slips into his pocket. He fills another glass of brandy and is in the act of drinking it as* REVETTE *enters.*]

REVETTE. Miguel.

MIGUEL. Doña Revette. This is an unlooked for pleasure.

REVETTE. Didn't you know that I'd come?

MIGUEL. I didn't expect you so soon. Well, since you are here, won't you sit down.

REVETTE. I've come to make a bargain with you, Miguel.

MIGUEL. Bargain? That word is scarcely reasonable between you and me. Well, what is this bargain?

REVETTE. Miguel! This afternoon I told you that there was nothing in the world that could persuade me to go back to you. I was wrong. I will come back—if you'll let Don Cesar de Mendoza go free. He's innocent. Let him go.

MIGUEL. Since when, my dear, have you taken it upon yourself to set up your judgment against the judgment of the state?

REVETTE. I'm not setting up my judgment against the state's, and yet the state has been known to make mistakes.

MIGUEL. The state never makes mistakes. He was found guilty by a jury. The law must take its course, unless you have found some new and irrefutable proof that the law is wrong.

REVETTE. I have no proof.

MIGUEL. Then I can do nothing.

REVETTE. You could let him go if you would.

MIGUEL. Even to do you a service I cannot interfere with the procedure of the law.

REVETTE. You could let him escape.

MIGUEL. You talk like a child.

REVETTE. You could grant him a passport out of Spain. He'd trouble neither Spain nor you again.

MIGUEL. The matter is out of my hands.

REVETTE. But your letter said that he would not be sent to Madrid until tonight. An opportunity could still be made for him to escape.

MIGUEL. Impossible.

REVETTE. Then let him have a new trial.

MIGUEL. A conviction has been obtained. A new trial can not be permitted.

REVETTE. Still, they won't execute him without a hearing.

MIGUEL. He said all he had to say. He will be executed immediately on reaching Madrid—unless he should resist. In that case he would be shot without ceremony.

REVETTE. You won't let this thing happen. You shan't—

MIGUEL. And why not? A jury pronounced him guilty and I don't find it in my conception of things to make it easier for my wife's lover.

REVETTE. He's not my lover. As the world understands that term, as you understand it, he's not.

MIGUEL. You tried unsuccessfully to convince me of that this afternoon.

REVETTE. And I told you the truth, Miguel. If you'll let him go I swear to you I'll never see him again. I won't

communicate with him. For me he shall be—dead. I'll obey you in word and deed for the rest of my life if you'll only let him go.

MIGUEL. And now you want me to believe that you'll break every oath you made this afternoon, merely for the sake of a man whom you say you do not love. No, really, this is too much.

REVETTE. I did not say I did not love him; I said he was not my lover. He's not.

MIGUEL. You draw fine distinctions, my dear.

REVETTE. No, love is something that can rise above fleshly things. Love is willing to give and to suffer. That's the love I have for this man and he for me. And I'm glad my eyes have been lifted to the hills, even though I may never climb them. I'm glad, for once, that I'm alive, because I believe that my being has meant some happiness for him. I would be very willing to give my life for him as he would be willing to give his for me. That's love, Miguel.

MIGUEL. I'm afraid my carnal mind cannot soar to such heights.

REVETTE. I promise you that if you'll let him go I'll prove my gratitude to you until I die. My independence, the dearest thing in life to me, shall bow to your will. I'll prove at home and abroad my obedience. I'll wipe out any gossip there may have been—

MIGUEL. Don't prolong this discussion any longer.

REVETTE. If you don't let him go you won't hold office another week.

MIGUEL. You talk like a mad woman.

REVETTE. I may be mad. Sometimes I think it's

difficult to distinguish between madness and sanity. I think you're mad to refuse.

MIGUEL. Indeed?

REVETTE. Yes. You've everything to gain by accepting and everything to lose by refusing.

MIGUEL. Don't you rather over rate your importance?

REVETTE. You know best. You know what an enquiry into your shipping activities at Barcelona twelve years ago might mean.

MIGUEL. Shipping! Barcelona! Women that give utterance to less absurd hallucinations than yours are put into institutions where their mental condition may be inquired into.

REVETTE. You can't frighten me. Besides, I don't care now what happens to me. And even if you could do as you threaten, could you cut out my tongue?

MIGUEL. The ravings of maniacs are heard only by those accustomed to such things.

REVETTE. Even so? Do you suppose that I'm so absolutely friendless that I shall just disappear without some questions being asked?

MIGUEL. Your friends will be properly advised.

REVETTE. Yes. And they would cause such gossip as would rock your ministerial chair much too violently for safety— [PEDRO *enters.*]

MIGUEL. What is it? I thought I told you that I was not to be disturbed.

PEDRO. Yes, Señor. But there is a caballero downstairs, Don Manuel Cortez. He won't go away. He says he has urgent business with the Señor.

MIGUEL. Cortez—I'll see him. [PEDRO *goes out.*]

Don't make any useless fuss. The servants will have their orders. [MIGUEL *goes toward door.*]

REVETTE. Miguel! Just a moment before you go.

[REVETTE *goes quickly toward him but before she can reach the door* MIGUEL *has gone, and the key is heard turning in the lock. She turns the handle unavailing once or twice. Then she goes to the window. Leaning over the sill she calls.*]

Marietta! Marietta!

MARIETTA. [*From below.*] Yes, Señora.

REVETTE. Did you find Captain Lang?

MARIETTA. Yes, Señora.

[REVETTE *looks nervously towards the door. She leaves the window and walks toward the table deep in thought. She sits. Her head on her hand, her eyes vague, hunted. Suddenly her gaze is arrested by some object lying on the table. She slowly picks it up. It is the knife left by* RAFAEL. *As she reads the inscription her despair is tempered with hope. For a second or two she stands irresolute. Then she goes quickly to the window and calls again.*]

REVETTE. Marietta, catch this. Hide it about you somewhere.

MARIETTA. Yes, Señora.

REVETTE. When Captain Lang gets here, tell him—

[*There is a noise of footsteps coming along the passage. Then there is a fumbling at the lock.* REVETTE *hurriedly steps behind the curtain.*]

RAFAEL. What have you got the door locked for. Stupid to lock doors— [*He enters.*] I delivered the letter to the Calle de San Pedro. He should be here any minute. I say— [*Perceiving that* MIGUEL *is not in the room.*] Now what do you think of that? Gone! [*He goes toward table and starts to search among the articles that litter it.*] What did I do with that knife?

[*As he proceeds with his search* REVETTE *comes from behind the curtain. She stands for a moment and then comes down to the chair that stands by the table.*]

REVETTE. Good evening.

RAFAEL. [*Looking up at her stupidly.*] Where did you spring from?

REVETTE. If you hadn't been so busy looking down, you might have seen me looking up. I was watching the sunset.

RAFAEL. The sunset?

REVETTE. The sunset.

RAFAEL. Where is he?

REVETTE. Who? Don Miguel? Oh, he was called out of the room on business.

RAFAEL. And he left you here alone? Well, that's the first good thing I ever knew him to do. Let me introduce myself. I'm called Rafael Roderiguez.

REVETTE. I'm delighted to know you, Don Rafael.

RAFAEL. And you? What do they call you?

REVETTE. You may call me Paula.

RAFAEL. Paula. That's a good name. [*Turning back*

to table.] The Señorita will pardon. I left something here a few minutes ago and I came back to find it.

REVETTE. I haven't had the pleasure of seeing the Señor before. Perhaps you are a stranger in Seville.

RAFAEL. No, I'm not exactly a stranger.

REVETTE. From your speech you might come from Granada. It's a beautiful city, Granada.

RAFAEL. Yes. That's where I did come from. And you are you a newcomer in Seville?

REVETTE. I am making a short stay here only.

RAFAEL. That's too bad. The Señorita is perhaps the new singer at the Café Don Alfonso?

REVETTE. No.

RAFAEL. Then you are the new dancer at the Inn of the Black Bull.

REVETTE. No, I'm not a dancer. [*Tapping him on the arm significantly with her fan.*] I have a little business with the Señor, that's all.

RAFAEL. [*With a leer.*] Oh, yes, I understand. [*Aside.*] Promiscuous women. I should apologise to the Señorita for intruding. Perhaps the Señorita will pardon if I look for my knife. Perhaps the Señorita has seen a silver knife? [*As he turns again to the table.*] Maybe I dropped it on the stairs. [*He starts for the door.*]

REVETTE. Perhaps the Señor found it and has put it away for safe keeping.

RAFAEL. I'll go and see.

REVETTE. But why in such a hurry? Is a knife so valuable? If Don Miguel has it, it is safe. When he comes in you can ask him.

RAFAEL. If I were the Señor I wouldn't leave the Señorita even for a few minutes.

REVETTE. You are very gallant, Señor.

RAFAEL. Not half so gallant as the Señorita deserves.

REVETTE. Let me offer you some wine. The day is hot and you must be thirsty.

RAFAEL. I must look for my knife.

REVETTE. When you've drunk your wine I shall help you look for it. [*Pouring out brandy and holding out the glass.*] Cognac is a brave drink for a brave caballero.

RAFAEL. [*Taking the glass and the compliment with a swagger.*] I'm the bravest man in Spain.

REVETTE. Here's to the bravest man in Spain.

RAFAEL. When the Señorita shall know me better, she shall know how brave I really am.

REVETTE. You are a matador perhaps?

RAFAEL. A matador? What's a matador? What's brave in killing a few bulls?

REVETTE. Well, in Spain what fiercer things are there to kill? There are no lions nor tigers in Spain.

RAFAEL. There are braver things than killing lions and tigers.

REVETTE. What? [*As* RAFAEL *goes back to his reverie.*] What?

RAFAEL. What did I do with that knife? I went first to the Calle de San Sebastian. Then I went to Granero's wineshop. Yes. That's where I missed it.

[*He goes to door.*]

REVETTE. That's a beautiful scarf you're wearing. Red is a brave color.

RAFAEL. [*Turning back.*] Will the Señorita wear it in my honor?

REVETTE. How kind of you. [*As he fumbles with the knot.*] May I? [*As she unties it.*] I shall keep this always in your memory, long after I'm far away from Seville.

RAFAEL. Why should the Señorita leave Seville yet? If the Señorita will stay I'll give her anything she wants. I've fallen in love with her and I'm a connoisseur of women.

REVETTE. I can imagine you set many poor hearts to beating. And not only in Granada.

RAFAEL. Oh, a few!

REVETTE. I can believe it, Don Rafael?

RAFAEL. Call me just Rafael.

REVETTE. [*Looking up into his face with half shut eyes.*] Rafael.

RAFAEL. When you call me Rafael, it is like music. And I shall call you Paula?

REVETTE. From today I shall be Paula only for you.

RAFAEL. [*Ecstatically.*] Paula. Paula. [*Jealously.*] How much do you care for the Señor? Do you love him?

REVETTE. [*Carelessly.*] Don Miguel is handsome and he is rich.

RAFAEL. Handsome? Not so handsome. As for riches—he may be rich but he keeps what he has for himself. Anyhow, his wife left him and if he is rich and handsome, what would she do that for?

REVETTE. It seems difficult to understand, doesn't it. But these women are strange animals. Some bite the

hand that feeds them; some prefer to feed themselves. Do you know the Señora de Ribera?

RAFAEL. No. I've been here only ten weeks, and during that time Don Miguel has been absent at Madrid. But I shall meet her tonight.

REVETTE. Oh!

RAFAEL. Yes. A homecoming has been arranged for her. [*He laughs drunkenly.*] I was on my way there with a letter when I found I had lost my knife.

REVETTE. I am going to the house of the Señora de Ribera later—I know Marietta, one of her women. I could take the letter for you and save you the trouble of going.

RAFAEL. A thousand thanks for the Señorita's kindness, but I couldn't inconvenience her. I must take it myself. [*He starts again for the door.*]

REVETTE. But there is no hurry for it, is there? Don't go yet. Please don't go yet. [*Her voice is very soft. There is invitation in her eyes.*]

RAFAEL. [*Coming close to her, as she half sits, half reclines, on the arm of the divan.*] Do you really want me to stay?

REVETTE. There's nothing in the world I want so much.

RAFAEL. [*Takes her hand and kisses it. Catching sight of the brandy decanter, he ambles toward the table and pours a tall wineglass of the raw spirit.*] The Señorita will not leave Sevilla. She will stay and I shall show her that I know how to treat her better than Don Miguel ever thought of treating her. I'd do anything, anything, for the Señorita.

REVETTE. Would you?

RAFAEL. Try me and see?

REVETTE. In these dull times what is there exciting to do? Now if we were only back in the old days when men were really brave, when men went out to fight for their women—

RAFAEL. You don't have to go back to the old days for that. I'll kill anyone you say—

REVETTE. You're not afraid to kill?

RAFAEL. Afraid! [*He laughs.*] No, I'm not afraid.

REVETTE. Oh, you're wonderful. I don't care so much for a man's money, or for gifts; but courage—strength—

RAFAEL. [*Swelling proudly.*] Ah!

REVETTE. [*Turning away.*] Oh, well, it's a good joke just the same.

RAFAEL. You don't believe me?

REVETTE. [*Laughing.*] Believe you? Of course not.

RAFAEL. I'll show you whether it's a joke or not. [*Fumbling in his pockets, he produces a small object which he holds out to* REVETTE *on the palm of his hand.*] Do you know what that is?

REVETTE. It looks like a bone.

RAFAEL. That's what it is, a bone. I took it from the first finger joint of the right hand of the first man that I killed. I keep it for luck. I have a lot more relics at home.

REVETTE. What was the name of the man?

RAFAEL. What do you want to know his name for?

REVETTE. I don't want to know it particularly. At any rate what did you kill him for?

RAFAEL. First of all because he had something that

I wanted, and secondly because I wanted to kill him. It is the most magnificent sensation in life to kill; to see the blood ooze from such a little hole as my knife makes. It's great to see the eyeballs start and pop. When I kill I'm greater than God. He makes life, but with one little blow of my knife I wipe out all his handiwork. I tell you I'm the bravest man in Spain.

REVETTE. At any rate there's only one man braver.

RAFAEL. There's no one braver than me.

REVETTE. Oh, then you haven't heard of the bandit, the man they call Lightning. There's a brave man for you. There was a gypsy at Granada called Maraquita, that was his sweetheart, she said—

RAFAEL. What did she say?

REVETTE. She said he was not only the bravest but the cleverest man in the world.

RAFAEL. [*Swaggering vainly.*] Did she say that?

REVETTE. That's what she said. Now, if I could only meet him—

RAFAEL. [*Carried away with the intoxication of his vanity, he bows low.*] Señorita.

REVETTE. And to think I should meet you here like this.

RAFAEL. I told you that I was the bravest man in Spain. I am. They call me Lightning because I'm so fast no one can catch me. Maraquita's not the only woman in the quarter that's crazy for me. All the women are crazy for me. Even the men like to touch me for luck.

REVETTE. I don't wonder at it. I should like to touch you too for luck. May I touch your arm? [RAFAEL *holds out his arm with a drunken leer.* REVETTE *runs her*

fingers from the shoulder to the elbow. Her touch is a further goad to his passion.] How strong you must be. It is like iron, your arm.

RAFAEL. Feel this muscle here.

REVETTE. That is like steel. Maraquita said you had more killings to your credit than any other bandit in Spain.

RAFAEL. I have, I have.

REVETTE. She told of that dangerous holdup at the Palacio Tirralva where you actually left your coat in the hands of the police.

RAFAEL. [*Laughing delightedly.*] Did she tell you that? What else did she say?

REVETTE. Oh, she told a thousand tales beside.

RAFAEL. What?

REVETTE. Well, she told of the corrida of Corpus Christi and how you got out from the bull ring under the president's very nose.

RAFAEL. I did, I did. What else.

REVETTE. She said that twelve years ago, before you were as famous as you are now, you had committed your cleverest, your most dangerous, murder.

RAFAEL. Which was that? Which was that?

REVETTE. She said you killed the old premier, old Don Gaspar de Mendoza y Gonzales. I knew she was wrong there.

RAFAEL. Why wrong? Why wrong?

REVETTE. Well, because I knew that it was Don Cesar who killed his father. Besides, I knew that a great bandit like Lightning wouldn't be so foolish as to be mixed in a political murder. That's too risky. Political murderers

always get caught, even the cleverest get caught. But that takes courage to kill a premier. He must have been a brave man, Don Cesar—

RAFAEL. Don Cesar. Bah— If I had my knife I'd show you.

REVETTE. Show me what? What has your knife to do with Don Gaspar? Don Gaspar was not killed with a knife.

RAFAEL. No. With a gun. Right through the forehead. He dropped like a stone. His tongue hung out. God, how stupid a great man looks dead, with his tongue out! [*Returning to the idea fixed in his mind.*] Granero's wine shop. That's the place I missed it.

[*Goes to the door.*]

REVETTE. Tell me about this knife. What kind of a knife is it? Is it a relic like the bone?

RAFAEL. Yes. It is a relic. It's a little silver knife. It has the crest of the house of Gonzales on the handle.

REVETTE. Where did you get it? [*Again as to a person who will answer while talking in his sleep.*] Where did you get it?

RAFAEL. I took it from his pocket the night of the murder. If I find it would you like me to give it to you?

REVETTE. Yes.

RAFAEL. What would you give me for it?

REVETTE. Find the knife and then I'll tell you.

RAFAEL. [*Taking her hand and trying to drag her to the divan.*] Come here.

REVETTE. Let us find the knife.

RAFAEL. Are you trying to play with me? [*Becoming very ugly.*] Don't try to play with me. [*As* REVETTE

makes no movement toward him.] Very well, then I'll go.

REVETTE. [*Coming to the divan.*] Now are you satisfied?

RAFAEL. [*Taking her hand.*] Your hand is little and soft. You shall see how good I shall be to you. When a woman pleases me I give her anything she wants. I dress her up so that no other man's girl can hold a candle to her. You shall see that Rafael knows how to treat women. Take off your mantilla, Señorita. I want to see your hair. [*As* REVETTE *obeys.*] Beautiful hair.

REVETTE. I suppose you've told that to many women. [*As she speaks she takes a long handled knife from* RAFAEL'S *sash.*] I suppose tonight you'll tell it to the Señora de Ribera? It is tonight she's coming home?

RAFAEL. Yes, she's coming home tonight?

REVETTE. How do you know she'll come home? They say in the city that she will never go back to the Señor. How do you know she's coming home?

RAFAEL. [*Leaning over her and taking the knife quietly from her hand.*] You might cut your pretty fingers. The knife is sharp.

REVETTE. I just wanted to look at it. Tell me, Rafael, how do you know the Señora's coming home?

RAFAEL. Why should you care whether she comes or not? Are you jealous of Don Miguel that you should be so anxious?

REVETTE. No. I'm neither in love nor jealous. But I am a woman and I like to know the gossip of the city. Tell me, Rafael—

RAFAEL. Well, if you must know I have a letter here in my pocket from Don Miguel that will bring her.

REVETTE. I don't believe any letter would bring her. Let me see it.

RAFAEL. I can't.

REVETTE. Why not? No one will know.

RAFAEL. I can't.

REVETTE. Oh, Rafael, please.

RAFAEL. I can't and that's all there is to it. It would get me into trouble.

REVETTE. Then let go my hand. How dare you speak of my being your woman when the first thing I ask you to do for me you refuse. Do you think I'm one of your gypsy girls to be ordered here and ordered there?

RAFAEL. Paula!

REVETTE. And don't call me Paula. You that talk of being the bravest man in Spain, Lightning. Ha! Ha! You're a coward, a poor coward. You're even afraid of getting into trouble with your master, Don Miguel. Well, at any rate Don Miguel is no coward.

RAFAEL. Paula!

REVETTE. You that boast of killing. You speak big words, but you prove nothing. You say you have a knife that belonged to Don Gaspar. Where is it? You say you have a letter for the Señora. What's that? You haven't got them. You never had them. You're a coward and you're a liar. You'd be afraid of a mouse or of a woman. You'd be afraid to tread upon a cockroach. Lightning!

[*She laughs again.*]

RAFAEL. I tell you I am brave. I've got a box full of relics at home.

REVVETTE. Yes. At home! But you won't show me a letter in your pocket.

RAFAEL. You're jealous.

REVETTE. Don't try to put your jealousy off on me. You coward!

RAFAEL. [*Makes a movement toward his knife in hand, but thinking better of it puts it back in his sash.*] If any man had called me that I'd have killed him.

[*He goes to door.*]

REVETTE. How stupid you are. Couldn't you see that I was only joking?

RAFAEL. You mean that you like me better than you do him?

REVETTE. Let me see that letter and I'll tell you.

RAFAEL. Let's go to my quarters. What's the use of wasting time here?

REVETTE. The letter. Please, Rafael?

[*He takes it from his pocket and gives it to her. With his free hand he takes her wrist and is drawing her to him as the door opens and* MIGUEL *enters.*]

MIGUEL. Take your filthy hands off.

RAFAEL. Mind who you call filthy.

MIGUEL. So my wife amuses herself with a model in the afternoon and a drunken peasant before evening. What have you told her, you fool?

RAFAEL. Your wife? Your wife! So it's a trap. You thought you'd get her here with me and trap me into making a blasted fool of myself, didn't you? Well, she may as well know something that I forgot to tell her. She may as well know that it was you—

MIGUEL. Be quiet.

RAFAEL. You that hired me to kill Don Gaspar de Mendoza for a paltry twenty thousand pesetas. You blasted son of a yellow dog— So you thought you'd get me that easy. You thought you'd send me to the garrotte—

[*The siren is heard. It is the signal that* HUBERT *has arrived.*]

REVETTE. No, Don Miguel is not going to do that.

RAFAEL. I'll see that he doesn't.

REVETTE. You are going to have a chance for your life. You will have six hours to get out of Spain. The Señor is going to write a passport now for Don Cesar de Mendoza under the name of Isidor Perez. Tonight he will leave Spain himself.

MIGUEL. Do you think you can threaten me on the ravings of a drunken imbecile.

RAFAEL. Let her talk.

REVETTE. Miguel, you hear that, don't you? You know what it is. It's the siren on Hubert Lang's car. He's here and he has the Chief of Police with him. Do as I tell you and they shall go back alone. If not it will be you, not Cesar de Mendoza, that will go to Madrid Gaol.

RAFAEL. Do what she tells you.

REVETTE. [*As the siren blows again.*] I suppose I ought to give you both up. But thank any gods there be I'm not a judge. You've been my husband—

RAFAEL. [*To* MIGUEL.] Well, you can do as you please. As for me, the game's up and I'm off.

[*He turns to the door.*]

MIGUEL. You filthy coward.

RAFAEL. Coward! I'm going to kill you for that.

[*With the quickness of lightning he pulls a gun.* REVETTE *with an involuntary movement attempts to push* MIGUEL *out of the way. The bullet lodges in the upper part of her right shoulder. She falls.* MIGUEL *points his gun at* RAFAEL. *The powder is damp and he misses fire.* RAFAEL *in his half drunken terror at having shot* REVETTE *drops his gun.* MIGUEL *throws himself upon him. Together they struggle through the open doorway. A groan is heard from* MIGUEL. *Steps are heard ascending the stairs.* RAFAEL *re-enters. His knife in his hand. It is red with blood. He makes a dive for the window as* HUBERT *enters with the Chief of Police. He looks back for a second and then catching hold of the vines that wreathe the window he steps over the sill. The vines break away from their supports and with a cry he falls into space. The Chief of Police goes to the window and looks over the balustrade. Meantime* HUBERT, *catching sight of* REVETTE, *raises her from the floor and puts her upon the divan.*]

CHIEF OF POLICE. Well, he's cheated the garotte at any rate.

HUBERT. Revette! Revette! Are you very much hurt?

REVETTE. No, I don't think so.

HUBERT. [*Discovering wound.*] The shoulder; it's a nasty place. I'll go for a doctor.

[*As he turns to go* CESAR *enters. He goes to* REVETTE.]

CESAR. If I had only come a few minutes earlier. I came as soon as I got your message.

REVETTE. I'm glad you didn't.

CESAR. Are you badly hurt?

HUBERT. I was just going for a doctor. Perhaps you'll stay here with her till I get back.

CESAR. Of course, of course. [HUBERT *goes out.*]

CHIEF OF POLICE. I'm going to look over the outside. Don't let any one into the room. [*He goes out.*]

CESAR. Very well. [*To* REVETTE.] That you should have suffered this for me!

REVETTE. If I shall never be called upon to suffer anything worse I shall be a debtor to fate.

CESAR. Don't try to talk.

REVETTE. How strong your hand is. And yet it is soft like a woman's. It doesn't seem possible that it is really your hand under my head. This afternoon it seemed as though that could never be again. Do you remember you said: "They say the day of miracles is passed." It would seem that the day of miracles never passes.

[CESAR *bends down his head and his lips rest on her hair. The young moon comes up behind the shadowy cypress trees. A nightingale breaks the stillness and the perfume of the orange flowers is in the air.*]

THE CURTAIN FALLS

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